Charting Material Memories:
an ethnography of visual and material transformations of woollen blankets in Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the United States

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DECLARATION

I, Fiona P. McDonald, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been clearly indicated in the thesis.

24 June 2014

Duitse, a Mháthair mo chroí
(for my loving Mother)

ABSTRACT

Taking one thing—the industrially produced woollen blanket—as an object of investigation, this thesis sets out to bring together a study of aesthetics, materiality, and locality in relation to the woollen blanket to consider it as a possible "technology of enchantment" (Gell 1998) in both its original and transformed states. This dissertation investigates the aesthetic transformations of the woollen blanket into art, craft, and Indigenous cultural property within our current historical moment and within specific abstract and concrete localities. Two distinct locations, Aotearoa New Zealand and North America, where such acts of transformation upon woollen blankets have had a sustained presence, are examined and compared. This project attempts to address how focusing upon the acts of transformation of materials makes visible a gap in the literature where more consideration into the movement and consumption of materials simultaneously in multiple locations is needed. The dynamism of multi-vocal and, yet, intensely local uses and transformations of woollen blankets reveal that movement and consumption are together a single transformative act. What results from these acts of transformation are both tangible and intangible values that will be described through case studies of use in order to draw out the imagined futurity of woollen blankets in their 'renewed' forms against their historical and colonial legacies. The varied values that emerge from distinct aesthetic transformations enable a new reading of the importance of aesthetic and creative manipulations of materials and matter that informs the local take-up of an industrial product. This thesis pushes beyond a current analytical framework that has considered how objects come to be entangled in local and global meanings through either their social life or biography.

Instead this thesis focuses on the intentional transformations of materials that inform larger critical arguments around how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and communities fashion cultural knowledge and identity through soft materials that are themselves manifestations of the hard-edged, imperial, colonial, and industrial projects.

PREFACE

Parts of the original research in Chapter One and Chapter Four have either been published or are in press within peer-reviewed publications during the writing up of this thesis. First is a book chapter entitled, "The woollen blanket and its imagined value(s): material transformations of woollen blankets in contemporary art" in *Materials Transformations: Anthropological Accounts of Materials and Society* edited by Susanne Kuechler and Adam Drazin (Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2014/2015). Second is a journal article, "Woollen Blankets in Contemporary Art: Mutable and Mobile Materials in the Work of Sonny Assu" *Material Culture Review* 76 (Fall 2012: 108-116) published in October 2013.

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NOTES ON LANGUAGE

In this thesis I use the term Indigenous. The use of the term Indigenous has a historical legacy that I wish to acknowledge in my own work. As Steve Leuthold points out, "since the 1970s, the term '[I]nidgenous' has acquired a political meaning; it reflects a growing awareness of the role of ethnicity in national cultures and acts as an organisational focal point for anticolonialism" (Leuthold 1998: 5). Added to this Jolene Rickard (*Tuscarora*) notes that "the use of the term 'Indigenous' needs to be understood as a global term with varying degrees of political clout and evolving definitions" (Rickard 2013: 54).

In the late-1990s when Leuthold made this observation, he summarised that Indigenous "refers to people who are minorities in their own homeland, who have suffered oppression in the context of colonial conquest, and who view their political situation in the context of neocolonialism" (5). This is the same working definition employed today by Christine Lalonde, one of the three curators for the 2013 Quinquenniel *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, as she points out that "[m]uch current vocabulary has been born out of a discourse of colonisation and is in the language of the dominating societies" (Lalonde 2013: 14). She goes on to clearly demonstrate that being Indigenous is a matter of self-identification with a specific cultural affiliation (15). That reasserting and "respect[ing] the specific names by which people identify themselves, individually and collectively, in their own language" is part of a process of decolonisation of language (14). In light of this, all individuals whose knowledge is represented in this thesis, and who have Indigenous affiliation to groups, nations, tribes, and bands, will be referred to by their

formal Indigenous name. Further, any Indigenous cultural objects or language will be translated in brackets after the use of the Indigenous word when applicable. When speaking about Tlingit or Māori cosmology, objects, or ceremonies, the *Língit* (Tlingit) or *Te Reo Māori* (Māori) word will be italicised followed by the closest English translation in brackets, and indicated from where the translation has emerged. For example, "The use of button robes at a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) serves multiple functions."

In addition to this, throughout this thesis all words relating to Indigenous will be capitalised. This includes Indigeneity, Indigenous Peoples, Native, and Native Peoples, as well as Native American and First Nations, Alaskan Natives, First Peoples, and Tribal Peoples. I employ this use of language in conforming with what Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny identify in *Performing Indigeneity* (forthcoming 2014, University of Nebraska Press) as the editorial best practice governed by the journal, *Cultural Survival*. As a "leading Indigenous human rights organization" *Cultural Survival* notes such identification as proper nouns "accords with the dignity and recognition of a collective proper noun." The use of the collective proper noun is unfortunately not employed consistently across disciplines, nor it is standardised or consistent in the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

All spelling conforms to British standards. In instances where American spelling is used in any cited text, the spelling has not been modified. Finally, I refer to the island nation know globally as New Zealand as Aotearoa New Zealand to respectfully acknowledge its Indigenous history and culture.

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INTRODUCTION

"[W]e are material beings inhabiting a material world […]."
—Ruth Philips (2012)—

Thinking Through Woollen Blankets

Our material world is made up of the "gathering of materials in movement" (Ingold 2013: 439). A woollen blanket is one such material enmeshed in a global web of action and significations (Gell 1998) where its movement and circulation has often been dependent upon its aesthetic transformation into some*thing* different. A product of industrial manufacture, a woollen blanket exists first and foremost as a woven woollen textile. At a basic level, it is some*thing* that most of us across various cultures might have had an experience with in either an imagined or an embodied way. Its basic material properties are that it is at times soft, itchy, scratchy, thick, dense, woven, pliable, and heavy. In the context of this ethnography, these sorts of woollen blankets have been imagined and reimagined by various people beyond their intended quotidian function as apparatus of survival. These re-imaginings transform blankets into a ready-made material for works of art, craft, and Indigenous regalia in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. It is these creative transformative and intentional actions by makers such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and craftspeople that capture the movement of blankets across time and place and subsequently make up the case studies of use presented in this thesis. I employ 'maker' as the operational noun or term for any individual who carries out the aesthetic transformation of woollen blankets. Bruno Latour might call this person a

"mediator"—someone "that cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. […] Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour 2005: 39). In Chapter Four I extend this by taking up the idea of maker and agent of transformation as 'memorist'.

Looking at three specific types of aesthetic transformations, or transformed modalities as forms of movement of the woollen blanket into contemporary art, craft, and Indigenous cultural property, this thesis opens up a deeper understanding of the intentionality of the modification of the material world around us. These case studies inform the larger anthropological goal of this project to bridge a gap in current literature by pushing beyond the current operational frameworks of consumption studies to consider more pointedly *how* transformed materials lead to the movement of knowledge and self-conscious production of cultural heritage in the circulation and formation of objects.

At the heart of this project are anthropological issues such as aesthetics and materials, social relations, and the importance of imagination within discrete cultures and the construction of heritage. As Susanne Kuechler writes today:

> At the start of a century in which the diversity of material worlds and the fragility, restriction and limitation of sources of materials has become the defining issue for peoples all over the world, anthropology's concern with what aesthetics does to the way we think and are in the world calls for a closer engagement with the ecology of cultural imagination (Forge 1965; Ingold 2012) (Kuechler 2014).

This statement is where this research enters into contemporary anthropology. To move beyond just the commodities perspective in order to illuminate new knowledge about where materials offers further insight into the articulation of various cultural

imaginations (Miller 2005; Apparduari 1988; Mansvelt 2005). As Arthur Danto notes, "transformations in the practice of art [and creative practices] […] has made meanings available to artists in realising works that draw on the meanings fabric possess in vernacular forms of life" (Danto 2002: 84). Therefore, this project takes up the timely call in anthropology for a closer engagement with our material world by looking specifically at how the various types of transformations of a textile material allows for the imagining and formation of cultural heritage in the form of art, craft, and Indigenous cultural property. And since, as Owe Ronström notes, "[h]eritage is indeed a global phenomenon[,]" it is necessary to "follow how it is 'downloaded', transformed, and used locally" (Ronström 2008: 1).

FIGURE 1. Queen's Coronation Hudson's Bay Point Blanket.
Royal Alberta Museum—H89.220.169 (Ethnology Collection).
Photograph taken with permission by Fiona P. McDonald

Woollen blankets then, as a material that have been and continue to be 'downloaded' into new contexts, have become impregnated with multiple meanings, values, and experiences across various social contexts. Understanding the various

types of transformations and the locality of their makers is the focus of the first three chapters in this thesis that moves us toward the fourth and final chapter to look at how signification emerges from materials through the role of metaphors. Therefore, by referring to a woollen blanket as a *thing* as opposed to an artefact or object at the outset, this use of language is a conscious attempt on my part to render the woollen blanket to be as neutral as possible to focus attention toward considering *why* specific materials invite action upon them and how these transformative actions ascribe self-conscious awareness of the condensation of cultural heritage in all its complexity in the production of the transformed product. Also, by using *thing* as a neutral noun allows me to unpack the plurality of meanings and significations (or its thingness) that have become visible through my research. And has also allowed me to not assume any shared understandings of woollen blankets across all field sites. It is a constant for nearly three hundred years within all field sites, but its meanings are manifold within the everyday. This allows me to present the heterogeneity of voices (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) rather than assuming a homogenisation of experiences. As Bill Brown notes, "The word [*thing*] designates the concrete yet ambiguous within the everyday" (Brown 2002: 4).

The Woollen Blanket as a *Thing*

Thing as a sign, word, notion, concept, and theory are independently and relationally complex. In the context of this thesis I use *thing* in a very specific way and re-address it as a running thread throughout the thesis and contextualise it in each chapter again. The key influence upon my proclivity to use *thing* to refer to a woollen blanket extends largely from Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" (2001) where he notes that

we look though objects but only ever really catch a glimpse at *things* (Brown 2002: 4). Therefore, we push beyond the object and is culturally specific terms and conditions, and ways of looking, this these aims to catch more of a glimpse, but rather to present an in depth understanding how objects are transformed. Again, Brown notes that "We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, how-ever momentarily" (Brown 2002: 4). This is precisely where we can look beyond the woollen blanket as an object to see its *thingness* when it becomes no longer serviceable and is transformed in to art, craft, and Indigenous material culture.

I look specifically at the woollen blanket through the lens of a *thing*-oriented ontology rather than object oriented one. As Serenella Ivino and Serpil Opperman argue in their comprehensive look at matter, "object oriented ontology is developed by such scholars as Graham Harman, Levi Bryant and Timothy Morton who contend that 'objects' are inclusive of humans, natural and cultural entities, language, nonhuman beings, cosmic bodies, as well as subatomic particles which, in their entanglements, constitute 'Being'" (Ivino and Opperman 2012: 79). But *thing* in my work comes from the profound impressions of the work Brown has done on "Thing Theory". Most specifically the body is a thing that encounters things in our material world (of course, this is a gesture at the work of Merleau Ponty).

Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell note in *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* (2007), "[t]he advantage of 'thing' as a term is that, unlike 'objects' [and] 'artefacts' […], they carry minimal theoretical baggage. The term is, as Lévi-Strauss points out about *truc* and *machine* […]

distinguished by its peculiar vacuity (Lévi-Strauss 1986: 55)" (Henere et al 2007: 5). In addition to this as we will see through the series of case studies presented as examples through this thesis, a woollen blanket is most often referred to as *a thing* by makers. Artists Jo Torr, Marie Watt, Suzanne Tamaki, and Liz Magor all call it a *thing* when we spoke about their artworks. Craft makers and market-goers in Aotearoa New Zealand often called woollen blankets 'iconic things'. Additionally, a woollen blanket when transformed in Tlingit communities become part of the Indigenous cultural system and called *at.óowu*, meaning an 'owned or purchased thing' (see Chapter Three for this full discussion).

Through an extension of Nicholas Thomas's ideas in his Foreword to *Art and Agency: Toward and Anthropology of* Art (1998), *things*, objects, or materials identified as a technology are by their very nature enchanting (Thomas 1998: viii). This of course was a statement referring to art as a "technology of enchantment". But I argue that transformation, something mentioned but not fully explored by Gell, is an integral part in the process of making a technology of enchantment. Therefore my research was aimed at ethnographically operationalising Gell's ideas on the 'technology of enchantment'. In this sense, I have taken his theory of the enchantment of technology and made it operational by focusing strictly upon transformation as a creative human action. In doing this, I consciously avoid what Gell would call an "interpretive theory" of art that is more closely related to the discipline of art history, but rather I look at a work of art as a *thing*, and focus on the social process of making and knowing. This is done to critically focus upon the resulting material responses to the physical properties and articulate the qualitative aspects that result in mnemonic powers for *things* called works of art or craft (Gell 1996: 187). Approaching the engagement of woollen trade

blankets in this manner allows for a more critical analysis of understanding its material potential, and to understanding the complex actions of transformation and making as integral to the process of enchantment that is both context and culturally specific.

"Making is […] not only a fulfillment of needs, but of desires—a process whereby mind, body, and imagination are integrated in the practice of thought and action" (Margetts 2011: 39). As Ben-Ami Scharfstein, who writes on the philosophical potential of the universality of art, suggests "[h]uman art as we know it would be impossible if we were not intelligent and self-conscious" (Scharfestein 1988: 47). Therefore I am focused specifically upon understanding intention, agency, and self-conscious human actions in our material world. Using the woollen blanket as the object of study, this investigation looks critically into understanding where and how human action such as creativity not only moves materials in our material world, but identifies how knowledge and meanings are impressed upon certain materials in the making and formation of cultural heritage and knowledge.[1]

Understanding human action upon materials draws this project in to explore, as Karen Barad's work has shown, how performing culture raises critical questions of ontology, materiality, and agency (Barad 2003). The current materialist turn, it seems, rests with an alliance in the post-humanist efforts in relation to performance. Meaning that the humanist discourse tends to focus on the human actor/agent as the site of meaning-making. This idea of performativity is complex and introduced here in this discussion only as a means of looking at the way human actors use materials as part of performing self and culture. The extension of performativity from linguistics has a

[1] Serenella Iovino and Serpil Opperman also argue that "material reality, or all objects, forces, things, natural and cultural systems, and processes [are] players in co-creating social and cultural meanings" (Iovino and Opperman 2012: 85).

complex genealogy that I wish to only touch upon but acknowledge that it falls outside the scope of this current project. It promises, however, sites for further work to be done on woollen blankets that link materiality and linguistics together. Karen Barad's study into the post-humanist notions of performativity defines performance as one that "incorporates important material and discursive, social and scientific, human and nonhuman, and natural and cultural factors" (Barad 2003: 9). Performance is addressed in Chapter Four in relation to the use of woollen blankets in Indigenous regalia in Southeast Alaska within Tlingit communities.

On this note of performativity and its obvious link to feminist theory, this research has also proven fruitful for where future work can look at the uses for the woollen blanket as an entry point to unpack the spaces of cultural interaction through a more feminist critique of textiles in art and craft through the lens of feminist theory. I make note of this again in Chapter Three in relation to gender and Chilkat weaving. I have consciously not undertaken any feminist reflections or critique in this thesis for several reasons. First, during my fieldwork there was often an unwillingness or lack of interest by some of the makers I worked with to frame their work within a strictly feminist reading. Therefore I did not pursue this line of inquiry all that actively. Those who offered me the opportunity to learn with and from them were mostly women and a feminist discussion seems like a logical starting point. However, I have consciously chosen not to make that the focus in this thesis and reserve that as an area for further research.

At the outset of my fieldwork where the parameters of my work were being refined and framed for each site, several of my core questions to makers working with woollen blankets gestured toward and understanding about their relationship to

feminism through the use of materials or to situate their work within the larger context of textile art. For the most part, there was a quiet yet notable resistance on the part of makers to necessarily have this sort of conversation about their artwork and craftworks. Mostly conversations gravitated toward what the woollen blankets meant/means to them and therefore this immediately directed to framing my study in relation to metaphors. Within the contemporary art context, the resistance of some to classify their art as gendered or related to textile art was palpable and the rich body of literature around feminist critique relating to textile arts is an area for future consideration. A feminist critique of materials and transformation is certainly a space for further analysis of feminist theory in art. Such a study would relate to a larger discussion of women working with textiles where this would be a contribution concerning specifically as woollen blankets. Therefore a twin to this dissertation might have explored a strictly feminist approach rather than the dynamic application of Alfred Gell's ideas about 'technologies of enchantment' and the emergent metaphors around materials.

The second reason why feminism is not the focus of this dissertation is that rather than focusing upon gendered sites I concentrated upon the larger cultural spaces and contexts of material flows in order to systematically focus on how materials move and are moved through transformation at each site. It is evident that all spaces within each field site are, to a certain degree, gendered sites, and this is the nexus where future research awaits. Some of these sites include the sewing circles, craft markets, and inter-generational private spaces where the making of regalia takes place with predominantly female relatives in Tlingit culture. As I note in Chapter Two, this is certainly the most gendered site of all, as women are the main organisers and

participants take on roles as makers and consumers at contemporary craft markets across the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Therefore my work focuses strictly on the materials in order to extend upon foundational ideas of transformation set forth by Gell but not fully explored in *Art and Agency* (1998).

A woollen blanket, in its most basic and essentialised material form, is raw wool that has been washed, dyed, carded, and manufactured into the densely woven and industrialised textile to perform a serviceable, utilitarian function. Woollen blankets are, as Tim Ingold suggests about most materials, ineffable (Ingold 2012: 435). Yet they are also mutable in that they are derived from multivalent matter which in three distinct social contexts (Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the United States) has invited very specific aesthetic and creative actions upon them by artists, designers, and craftspeople whereby they have created new objects and artefacts that help in understanding the production and maintenance of cultural heritage and identity. These actions are the transformation from one form into another—from a blanket into either a work of art, or a contemporary craft commodity, or a piece of Indigenous regalia. Transformation is one of the critical movements in the circulation of materials.

This thesis is about tracing out the varied acts of transforming materials to make visible not only the cultural values of the actors undertaking the action upon woollen blankets, but considering transformation as critically embedded in furthering an understanding of the imagined potential of our material world. A woollen blanket, as this thesis shows, is integrally entangled within our imagined and embodied corporal experiences of the everyday. These experiences are what set us in proximity to the knowledge that orients cosmological frameworks, defines experiences with the past and present, and uses materials as a medium through which to imagine the

futurity of our material world. The aim of this thesis it so show how woollen blankets have been transformed in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand in our contemporary moment to render visible the ways in which cultural heritage is self-consciously created, sustained, contested, and imagined through materials.

At the outset of my fieldwork, I wondered what it was about a woollen blanket that begs its aesthetic transformation from something that covers a bed, and into a work of art, or a craft commodity, or a piece of Indigenous ceremonial regalia? Why a woollen blanket? What are the multivalent applications of everyday objects (Baudrillard 1996: 92)? And what does understanding these various types of transformations tell us about the role of cultural knowledge today? In order to seek answers to these questions I had to 'follow a thing' in a systematic way across field sites in order to examine the phenomenon within the larger world systems in which the *thing* exists (Marcus 1995: 106-107). The shared experience with this material *thing* was the core to unpacking the significance of difference across all sites of inquiry. I soon came to realise that a woollen blanket is both a remarkable and an unremarkable *thing*. As a *thing*, it exists continually in a state of flux across time and space where its material qualities—coupled, to a degree, with its physical properties—are active in turning it into a "technology of enchantment" (Brown 2001; Gell 1998). My two main theoretical arguments in this ethnographic research project are woven throughout the thesis as I present the agentive aspects of materials in relation to the agency of the creators of these new forms, as well as developing a more critical understanding of how transformation as a process of movement offers us more insight into the role materials play in forming cultural knowledge.

The woollen blankets in this material ethnography have a history of production

that dates back to the seventeenth century in England. From the date of original manufacture around the 1660s, most woollen blankets have tended to be monochromatic (grey, white, red, blue, green, purple) with dark bands at the bottom and small lines (or point markings) along the edge that denote its size or quality (FIGURE 1).[2] The colour and pattern range is vast and is generally reflective of the weaving mills that produced them (and continue to produce in some instances) around the globe. For example, grey blankets have commonly been issued for naval and military services even though they have been produced at various different mills.[3] More on this later.

The type of woollen blankets this thesis explores are: thick, impenetrable, itchy, potent, and dense, yet warm, comforting, protective and laced with a truly corporeal experience. As a utilitarian *thing* the blanket evokes a universal association of warmth, birth, death, wrapping, folding, and protection. What is significant about this unremarkable *thing* is its sustainability and durability once it becomes interwoven with both ideologies and genealogies related to the creation, production, and imagination around cultural heritage. The blankets under investigation in this project have become contaminated with accusations and debates around colonialism, and yet the use of these blankets in varied nexuses demonstrates how people manage colonial legacies through material culture and an engagement with cultural heritage.

[2] See Oxfordshire Records Office file B1/1/X/4 (no date) for a table of the blanket lengths and the weights of yarn or blend required at the Early's of Witney blanket mills. Additionally, the warp was also called a "chain" and was another means of measuring blankets. 'Chain Books' can be found at the Oxfordshire Regional Archive. From April 1848-February 1950 there are twenty (20) examples at this archive.

[3] Within archives in Canada, the USA, Aotearoa New Zealand, and England, there are several references to orders placed by the Navy. One example is at the Oxfordshire Regional Archives B1/2/N7/1 from 1815.

According to Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, "the predominant sense of matter in modern Western culture has been it is essentially passive stuff, set in motion by human agents who use it as a means of survival, modify as a vehicle of aesthetic expression[,] and impose subjectivity upon it" (Coole and Frost 2010: 92). How, then, do the varied actions on woollen blankets make visible not only the social relations that coalesce around materials, but also the way identities—collective and individual, Indigenous and non-Indigenous—are constructed, construed, adapted, appropriated, innovated, and sustained through an engagement with social knowledge and material culture. Curator Jennifer Newell addresses this point in her discussion of historical research with digital objects versus objects found within collections that "the meanings of objects are highly mutable, changing as their contexts change (Thomas 1991). The emotional impact or 'push' of an object (Thrift, 2004: 64) is also variable, depending on the surrounding context and on who is in its vicinity" (Newell 2012: 295).

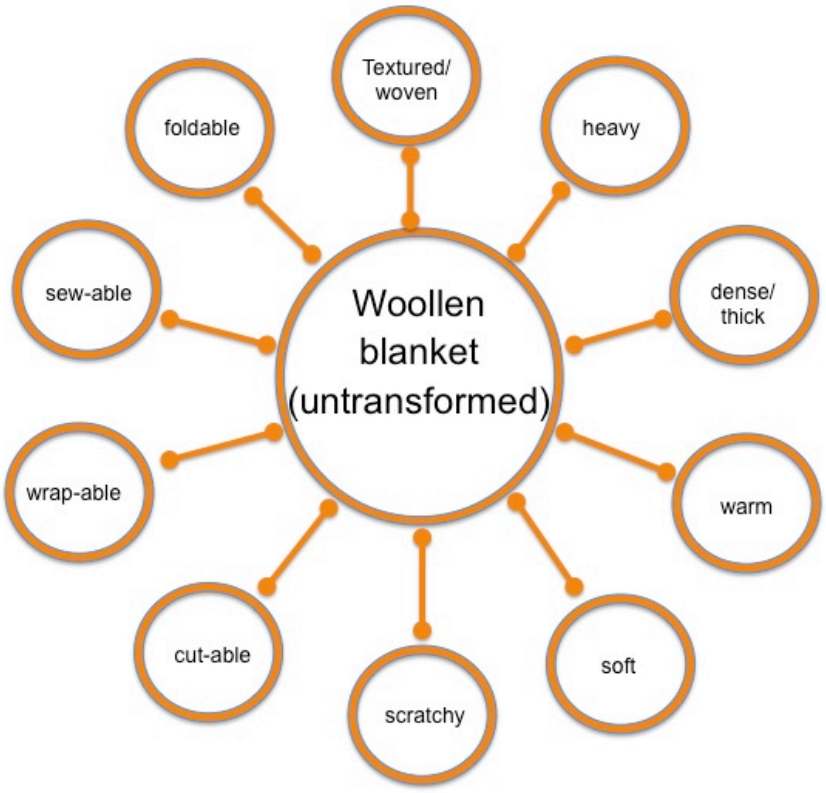
The telos of my research is to look critically at how *things* like woollen blankets are transformed in creative ways, opening up a larger ontological investigation of materials in our material world. In this instance, creativity is viewed as a human activity "that transforms existing cultural practices in a manner that a community or certain of its members find [of] value" (Lavine, Narayan, Rosaldo 1993: 5). Through a series of three case studies focused upon types of actions tied to the creative practices of art, craft, and Indigenous customary art, the varied processes of transforming woollen blankets and the objects they become foregrounds related social factors and "social aggregates" such as memory, nationalism, politics, economies, cosmologies, and at times kinship (Latour 2005: 5).

It has been suggested by Jeremy Coote that "[a]ll human activity has an aesthetic aspect" (Coote 1996: 246). If we situate Coote's idea next to Alfred Gell's keystone argument in the anthropology of art that "human agency is exercised within the material world" (Gell 1998: 20), what becomes visible is the central focus of my investigation into how creativity as a human activity creates new aesthetic forms, but makes visible how materials are critical to the transformation of cultural practices that extend from world systems of art, craft, Indigenous performances, as well as politics and economics. Yet what is it about a woollen blanket that has invited so much simultaneous imaginative actions upon it? How does the woollen blanket become such a rich "surface of continual interchange" (Ingold 2013)?

Properties and Qualities—Matter that Matters

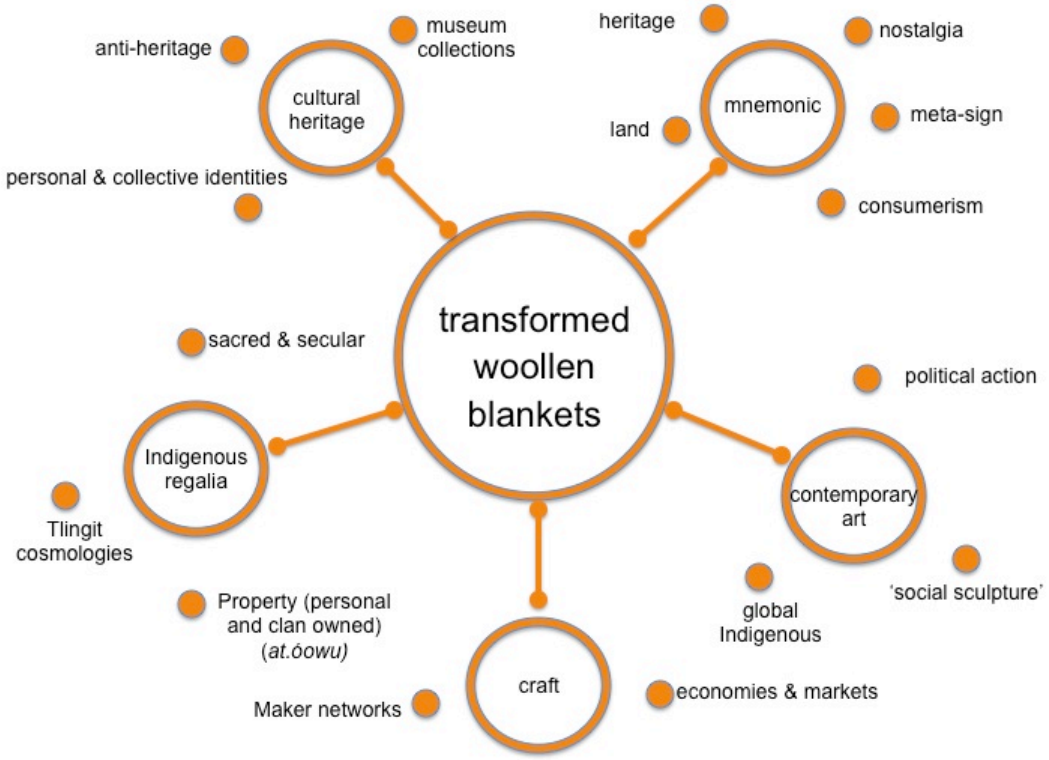
As Tim Ingold notes in relation to the work of design theorist David Pry, the "distinction between the properties and qualities of materials is very important to understanding the types [of creative human actions and the] meaning of these actions on materials." Ingold notes that "[p]roperties, for Pye (1969: 47), are objective and scientifically measurable; qualities are subjective—they are ideas in people's heads which they project onto the material in question" (Ingold 2012: 434). Noting the difference between properties and qualities was central to this research. In a visualisation of this data that stems from Susan Buck-Morss's "sociograms" (1995) and Adam Drazin, Camille Sundwall, and Haidy Geismar's "property maps" (2013), the following two diagrams chart the difference between the qualities and properties that artists, crafts people, and Indigenous makers have referred to in the totality of this research project.

DIAGRAM 1. Mapping the physical, material properties of woollen blankets



I argue that the physical properties here are central to its adaptation as a ready-made material in all three transformation types for art, craft, and regalia. At its basic level of matter, it is these properties that make it an ideal "surface" for interchange. As Serenella Iovino and Serpil Opperman note, "in all its forms, [matter,] in this regard, [matter and material] becomes a site of narrativity, a storied matter, embodying its own narratives in the minds of human agents and in the very structure of its own self-constructive forces" (Iovino and Opperman 2012: 83). This matter is where the properties lead it to have a qualitative value when transformed into cultural heritage, Indigenous regalia, craft, and contemporary art. As is mapped out in DIAGRAM 3, the constellation of social meaning that emerges from this transformed matter is expansive.

DIAGRAM 2. Mapping the constellation of cultural properties, uses, and contexts of transformed woollen blankets



Materiality and the Sensory Nature of a Blanket

The "physical properties [of materials] have an effect on the senses, but it is the process of aesthetic transformation that gives a value to a property, a value which often becomes associated with an emotional response" argues Howard Morphy (Morphy 1993: 7; Turney 2009: 117; Stoller 1997). Therefore, the qualitative properties, like those linked to values and metaphors, and the physical properties, such as those aspects that define its material make-up, are both critical to understanding the process and reasoning of aesthetic transformations of woollen blankets and the "collective imagination across cultures" (Kuechler 2014: 6). Throughout this thesis, the related sensory responses to woollen blankets are documented based on the experiences others have with blankets and tracked through

primary explanations offered up by artists, makers, and crafts people who work with blankets, as well as those who have had personal experiences with this material. “The relationship to textiles, sensory perception and life refers to touch, the senses, and physical movement” as Joanne Turney rightly observes (Turney 2009: 154). Therefore, I acknowledge my own sensory experience with blankets through primary observations carried out in museum and private collections, as well as within art galleries and auction houses, sites of manufacturing, studios, homes, and craft markets where I experienced firsthand, and through my hands, many of the physical properties of specific blankets. By this I am referring to the blanket’s properties mentioned earlier such as its thick, itchy, dusty, dense makeup. As curator and historian Jennifer Newell remarks, “response matters[;] […] historical understandings and engagements with history are not only created through information and the analysis of data, they are also formed by the learning that occurs through sensory, emotive responses” (Newell 2012: 296). These sensory responses make up a large part of the data collected in this ethnographic study of woollen blankets.

Furthermore, the experiential properties acquired through sensory actions like touch, sight, and smell deepen our responses to and understanding of our material world. Returning again to Coote, he suggests that “[w]e are always, though at varying levels of awareness, concerned with the aesthetic qualities of our aural, haptic, kinetic, and visual sensations” (Coote 1996: 246). What then are the varied aesthetic qualities of woollen blankets that invite very specific actions such as cutting, folding, sewing, quilting, stretching, dying, or conservation as actions upon them within distinct cultures?

Through C.A. Bayly’s anthropological research of cloth in India, we have come

to learn that cloth is "porous, dense, and intertwining, and could thus absorb and retain spirit/substance for many years. As an artefact, cloth of cotton, wool or silk could not approach the especially powerful transformative capacity of food, but on the other hand it lasted longer than food, [and] could travel over long distances" (Bayly 1986: 227). When looking critically at the larger values associated with woollen blankets as they moved across great distances from England to colonial settler states like India, Africa, North American, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, one needs to consider the essentialised materiality of this textile and why it resonates within so many cultures over extended periods of time. All taxonomies of blankets (hide, wool, cotton, synthetic fibres, etc.) are generally associated with a sense of survival (primal instinct) that evokes shared sensorial experience of warmth and protection.

The woollen blankets presented in this material ethnography may vary in size, colour, and patterning that now resonate with a densely ingrained local aesthetic, but historically they have always had the same essentialised woollen materiality.[4] The

[4] In Canada, the woollen blanket with a white field and multi-coloured stripes of red, blue, yellow, and green (the stripes were first used to commemorate Queen Anne in the early-1700s who instituted a guild to protect weavers in England) more commonly identified as the Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket or candy-stripe blanket. The Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket was enlisted as a commodity in the Canadian fur trade industry, and subsequently has been regarded as an 'article' with 'use-value.' When the Hudson's Bay Point blanket is reflected upon from a Marxist material perspective, the blanket moves beyond being a utilitarian object, necessary for survival in harsh environments, and becomes a repository of value and memory by subsequent agents who either possess it or come into contact with the woollen blanket. This is a point explored in depth through Chapter Four. It is important to note here that the monetary value(s) and meaning(s) of the blanket have historically been dependent primarily on two factors. First, is the point system or point marks on blankets, and the second factor is the Made Beaver token system (the first monetary system introduced into the North American fur trade industry). While points are a feature in the design of the blanket that pre-date the tokens system of value, the tokens are themselves objects. The social process of economics that bring these two objects into the trade interaction relate to the establishment complex and often unbalanced colonial standards of trade and value. This issue reappears in Chapter One where artists articulate these imbalances through the ways in which they transform woollen blankets.

wool used in the blankets in this investigation was generally collected from various settler colonies across the British Empire from India to Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere in the British Isles. The wool was then processed in the heart of Britain's weaving community in Oxfordshire. A brief history of one of the main weaving mills in Witney notes that:

> By the late 1670's the Witney blanket makers were acknowledged the best in England. At least 150 looms were working, employing nearly 3,000 people of all ages. The master weaver would buy and blend the wool, and then he would take it by pack-horse (as the tracks [of old roads from the Roman Empire] were too small for wagons) up to farms and cottages around Witney. He would leave it there to be carded by men and spun into yarn on spinning wheels by the women and children […]. When the blankets had been home-woven from this yarn by the master weaver and his family […] they still looked like pieces of sacking. [The] process of finishing was left to the tuckers, and involved, washing, shrinking, tentering to the correct size on outside racks, and finally raising the blankets by pulling up the nap to make them fluffy (Hanson 1973: 3).

The material essence articulated through the manufacture of woollen blankets has been employed in varied contexts to reference the durability it possesses. In some instances these extend beyond the woollen blankets' utilitarian function, and they have been imagined beyond a covering on a bed to sails on small boats, and coverings on doors, and have been employed as tools in the form of shelter to protect one from

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Additionally, in 2014, Métis artist Aaron Paquette was commissioned to create a mural at the Grandin LRT train station in Edmonton, Alberta (Canada). As an Indigenous artist, Paquette's mural was commissioned to respond to the extremely controversial mural also in this subway station by Sylvie Nadeau. Nadeau's mural depicts Indigenous peoples and the Grey Nun mission; this work is highly criticised for its depiction of romanticizing the Indian Residential School program that took Indigenous children away from their families. This program is discussed in Chapter One in relation to works by Leah Decter and Jaimie Isaac. In a review of Paquette's mural, a local unidentified commentator wrote that the coloured stripes of the blankets actually relate to 'Aboriginal colours'. "The way Paquette uses "Hudson's Bay stripes" the company took from their original customers in his mural ties into the blankets in Nadeau's work, and it opens up that tidbit of history as well. The Bay used the Aboriginals' colours to appeal to them!" (Edmonton Journal website, available at http://blogs.edmontonjournal.com/2014/03/17/2o14-o3-16-grandin-stations-conversation/?postpost=v2#content, last accessed 17 March 2014).

the elements when transformed into a coat known historically as a capoté (see APPENDIX 4 for a historical summary of the blanket coat in North America). Additionally see APPENDIX 2 for an excerpt from the *Colonialism Ain't Fashionable* website—a community journalism project that anonymously takes to task those wearing anything related to the Hudson's Bay Company by publicly posting photos of anyone wearing capotés or other items with the blanket stripes and identifying them as supporters of colonialism. According to the website, the goal of the project: "documenting the people wearing/owning these items to spark discussion on Canada's hidden colonial history. We don't want to shame individuals, but we do want to shame this culture that collectively allows Hudson's Bay to continue to exist and flourish in almost every city in the country" (*Colonialism Ain't Fashionable* website, available at http://colonialismaintfashionable.tumblr.com/HudsonBayHistory, last accessed 25 February 2014).

The basic essentialised properties that make a blanket robust for such a plentitude of uses has allowed it to be imagined into new forms within various contexts across the globe, but for some reason has been left unexamined through an anthropological lens. As such, woollen blankets are critical *things* that have not yet been investigated. Therefore 'thinking through blankets' by investigating the difference(s) as spaces of significance is approached through an analysis of the social nuances that transformative acts on mundane things make to knowing culture and society today.

Material Culture as Methodological Apparatus

The path paved for this study is supported by many critical anthropological studies that rest at the intersection of material culture studies and the anthropology of art. More in depth literature reviews are introduced in each chapter to further contextualise anthropological discussions around the bodies of literature for contemporary art (Chapter One), contemporary craft (Chapter Two), Indigenous material culture (Chapter Three), and metaphors (Chapter Four). But in the context of the larger discourse of object-oriented studies, central and critical ontological questions around the woollen blanket as an object or *thing* situates how material culture studies allows us to draw out an *understanding of the understandings* of materials in our material world. An exegesis on this area of my investigation is based on the relationship between the subject and the object that Bruno Latour exhaustively explores (1993). This framework, however, is really only the starting point to enable us to ask ourselves questions why some *things* persist and enchant with little to no critical investigation.

In this instance, Latour argues that it is always possible to bring back to the foreground objects that have receded into obscurity by "using archives, documents, memoirs, museum collections, etc., to artificially produce, through historians' accounts, the state of crisis in which machines, devices, and implements were born" (Latour 2005: 81). I draw greatly from previous graduate work I carried out in my MA thesis (2006), as well as the historical work done by Peter C. Newman and Harold Tichenor (2003) to study the history of woollen blankets and their manufacture. In generaly, I hope to advance Latour's idea further here to suggest that artworks, craft

items, and Indigenous cultural property are equally as important to understanding how *things* appear and reappear, fold and unfold, why, when, where, and by whom.

Between 2000 and 2005, a very specific body of literature was published that resulted from fifteen years of accumulated studies that were carried out by anthropologists in a rather positive response to Arjun Appadurai's commodity oriented approach to studying things presented in *The Social Life of Things: A Commodities Perspective* (1986). This commodities perspective led to a series of theoretical ideas that propagated several object-oriented ethnographies that focused mostly upon consumption as the primary action upon things, objects, and materials (Miller 2000; Kopytoff 1986; Myers 2006; Hoskins 1998; Kay 1997; Mintz 1985; Mansvelt 2005). This rich archive of work subsequently opened up the current gap in the literature where understanding the movement of *things*, objects, commodities, and gifts needs to take on a more materials focused approach to garner a less value-biased entry point. This is precisely where my work on the woollen blanket in this material ethnography enters. By understanding not only the discourse of material culture, I am moving through this research to develop further a focused theoretical mechanism for exploring the diversity of the synaesthetic and multisensorial nature of our material world by building upon the idea of transformation as process and performance with materials. Other projects such as anthropologist Lucy Norris's study of waste in India (Norris 2010) is also working to inform this gap in the literature.

In stepping away from a strict commodities perspective that assumes consumption as one of the phases of use of an object, I am demonstrating how the woollen blanket acts as a key tool for understanding what Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry identify as 'the material culture turn' in anthropological theory (Hicks 2010). It

is important to note that I consciously do not re-present in this thesis a Marxist discussion of commodity fetish in relation to the woollen blanket; this was already central to historical work presented as part of my pilot project from an Art Historical perspective (McDonald 2006). In brief here, however, it is important to note that the logical starting point for unpacking a Marxist commodities perspective for woollen blankets is best situated around a discussion of the introduction of the Made Beaver token system. This monetary system was applied through the fur trade industry in Canada around the 1880s as a mediating colonial apparatus for the trade of furs for Western industrial products like woollen blankets. From my own previous historical work on woollen blankets, Marx's two distinct models for calculating the circulation of commodities are as follows: (A) Commodities—Money—Commodities and (B) Money—Commodities—Money. In the implementation of a monetary token system objects were transformed into commodities through the following process:

Beaver Pelt(s)→Token(s) Token(s)→Point blanket

Elsewhere (McDonald 2006) I have traced out clearly the commodities perspective with rich historical data that shows how "[t]he monetary value of a Point blanket is an historically dependent and highly contested subject […]. In a note from the Governor and Committee to either Thomas Hutchins or the Chief factor "for the time being at Fort Albany" dated 4 May 1780—one year after the first official order was placed—it was written and directed that:

> The one Pointed Blankets are to be charged at 1 Beaver each
> one and half pointed 2 do.
> Two pointed 2 ½ do.
> Two and half 3 do.
> Three pointed 3 ½ do.
>
> (HBCA Blanket search file #1 (HBCA A6/20)

Five years later, the value of a [woollen] blanket continued to be an issue and one beaver was intended to correspond to one point. P. Turmor states in a letter on 20 September 1785 regarding "Trade at Waratowca Lake" that:

> …our Point Blankets do not seem to answer well very few Indians will go to the price of them but say the makes of them are the number of Beaver which should be paid for them but now 1 ½ Point are 2 beaver, the 2 Point 2 ½ - the 2 ½ Point 3 And the 3 Point 4 Beaver each […].[5]

As the uncertainty between the value of a beaver in relation to a point continued for several years, a letter from the Governor and Company in London to E. Jarwis (this is not a known name and is indicated so in the HBCA search file) and Council (Albany) clarified that they—the chief factors, employees, and traders associated with the honorable company:

> Be directed that pointed Blankets be traded in future at one Beaver for one Point, & half a Beaver for half a point, & and so in proportion for the Others.[6]

At this time, a beaver pelt was directly exchanged for a blanket (McDonald 2006: 68-69).

Returning now to the placement of this research within current bodies of distinct literature. In terms of the woollen blanket being a woven textile, this examination of a specific textile as a *thing* sits firmly in relation to the extensive work currently underway in the United States (Tobin and Dobard 2000; Cubbs, Arnett, & Friis-Hansen 2006) and the Pacific (Kuechler *et al*. 2009) concerning stitched blankets and quilts. The keen interest in the role of blankets and quilts raises issues of a visual lexicon that becomes intrinsic to the continual adoption and production of textiles within various communities. My project contributes to a body of literature that critically investigates the role of the materiality of

[5] HBCA Blanket Search file #4 (HBCA 11/45, FO.31-3d)—Transcribed from excerpt found in Search File.
[6] HBCA Blanket Search file #4 (HBCA A6/13, fo.149)—Transcribed from excerpt found in Search File.

things/objects in the construction of social identity. To add to current debates, I consider woollen blankets for their visibility, materiality, and mobility—either intentionally or by default. The trend in scholarly attention given to textiles has tended to give more of a historical placement of materials rather than theorising materials *per se*. The common thread, however, is the negotiations that play out between cloth and the communities that use or make textiles. Much like C.A. Bayly's work mentioned already, the vast consideration given to the interaction between the consumer/wearer of cloth (subject) and the material or cloth itself (thing) teases out the social consequences of such engagements (Bayly 1986; Weiner and Schneider 1989).

The scope of literature addressing textiles tends to concentrate upon five key themes: cotton (Grieves 2001; Higgens and Tweedale 1997), fashion (Aldrich 2002; Andrade 2005), Indian textiles (Gavin and Barnes 2000; Norris 2003; Swallow 2000), the woollen industry in the UK (Gervers 1977; Ryder 1996), and, more broadly, the textile manufacture and mechanics of production (Brunton 2002; Cookson 1997; Godley 1998). Within this body of literature the role of woollen trade blankets and their multiplicity of uses transcend these repositories of consideration and any work on woollen blankets is non-existent. Both in North America and Aotearoa New Zealand, textile literature is an engagement mostly with fashion studies and is an exhaustive and fruitful exploration of garments found in eighteenth and nineteenth century human ecology collections (Labrum 2007; Cummings 2008). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Costume and Textile Section of the Auckland Museum publishes a journal bi-annually on material culture, textiles, and fashion research underway in the antipodes. Since its inception in 2002, approximately 80% percent of articles published in this journal centre around the history of fashion. The extent to which the other 20% percent takes textiles as a means of theoretical

engagement is limited. What is also evident in this body of literature is a complete absence of cross-cultural critique of how varied societies engage with colonial material culture.

By investigating the use(s) and transformation(s) of a specific material within various material and immaterial contexts this thesis sets out to situate this project in the aforementioned body of literature to complement and respond to the writings that explore the dynamics between people and their material world. Without question, the existing body of literature stresses the importance of object-based histories, and Latourian subject-object relations, but nevertheless offers up an arena for my research to move textiles as a material into a theoretical framework to address the strong relationship between materials and creativity.

Restating and extrapolating from Susan M. Pearce's core questions in "Foreword: words and things" to *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* (1997), I seek to articulate why blankets, when considered as either a *thing* or an object, "have the ethical and aesthetic resonances which they have" (Pearce 1997: 2).[7] To understand what these "resonances" are, the connection between narrative and material is teased apart in each chapter of this thesis. Pearce states that "[t]he relationship between a narrative, acted or written, and a piece of woven cloth—between text and textile—spells out our identity" (Pearce 1997: 29). If this is the case, how then are biographical narratives woven into materials that are not regionally manufactured but have a legacy as an imported good? The current artistic and cultural

[7] Alfred Gell notes that: "It is widely agreed that ethics and aesthetics belong in the same category. I would suggest that the study of aesthetics is to the domain of art as the study of theology is to the domain of religion. That is to say, aesthetics is a branch of moral discourse which depends on the acceptance of the initial articles of faith: that in the aesthetically valued object there resides the principle of the True and the Good, and that the study of aesthetically valued objects constitutes a path toward transcendence" (Gell 1999: 161).

responses to woollen trade blankets mark the culmination of social, political, and economic circumstances that frame our historical moment. This moment builds upon the past and by looking at what historians would label as modern history, the frame of artistic and cultural production over the past decade highlights how knowledge is produced and transmitted.

Material and object-based ethnographies have become integral to linking sites and experiences; generated from these sites is the stimuli for knowledge production. Such ethnographic studies that consider material culture and knowledge production have become more frequent since the mid-1980s as evidenced by Sidney Mintz in *Sweetness and Power* (1985) and Janet Hoskins's *Object Biographies* (1998) as a way to consider how objects circulate and garner meaning but in turn, how the circulation of material culture informs broader issues such as cultural value, exchange dynamics, and identity. The arguments and methodologies set forth by Mintz and followed by Hoskins are best considered when anchored in relation to the seminal work of Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff's contribution to object-based investigations. In *The Social Life of Things* (1988), Appadurai brings forth a theory of agency imbued in things that has been applied endlessly in anthropological, sociological, and art historical investigations. This notion of a taxonomic analysis of objects whereby classes of objects have social lives, or as Kopytoff demonstrates that a single object has a biography, allows my research to look at how the global circulation of woollen blankets—that is intimately tied with a history of the woollen trade, as well as colonial trade—has a legacy that is unique to our current historical moment.

Appadurai suggests that in the pursuit of understanding the social life of things, the "commodity perspective on things represents a valuable point of entry to the revived,

semiotically oriented interests in material culture […]" (Appadurai 1986: 5). However, it must be acknowledged that an economic discussion of material culture reemerges through my project because woollen blankets were originally dispatched on colonial missions to be traded, used in barter performances, and later as commodities. Their reworking into new forms situates them at times with a new economic value (Marx 1848 (2004); Patterson 2009) I traced out earlier in relation to the introduction the Made Beaver (MB) monetary token system in Canada in the late-nineteenth century. This value, though not readily visible or transparent is, however, demonstrated in cultural acts such as the accumulation of blankets as wealth to be distributed at Indigenous potlatches, thank-you parties, or *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremonies) along the Pacific Northwest of North America that I discuss in both Chapter One and Chapter Three.

In an extension from any sort of preliminary discussion of the haptic in Chapter Four, the role of the visual in this project is also central to the historical use of photographs and paintings used in my research. Moving beyond this theoretical framework for considering material culture through semiotics, another goal of my project is to explore alternative models and theories, such as Roland Barthes' ideas explored in *The Metaphor of the Eye* (1963) or how materiality evokes the narrative through the idea of the haptic.[8] I returned many times to this idea of thinking, feeling, touching, and knowing in relation to material memories as though they fall along the same axis of sensory experience. This query aligns with the notion of the visual as 'haptic' and the prioritisation of the tactile elicited through the visual discussed in Chapter Four. Since

[8] At first thought, the rudimentary definition of 'haptic' (as suggested to me by Professor Christopher Pinney as a possible framework to explore) elicits a question of the tactile and having to do with a sense of touch (Stoller 1997). Perhaps drawing this in to questions of how individuals engage with, through uses such as wearing or re-working, the notion of haptic also relates to how the material nature of wool is re-constituted.

there are two methodological approaches to visual anthropology: (1) using film, video, and photography as means of recording data; and (2) using historical photographs, visual culture, and archived materials as data (Banks & Morphy 1997), I am using the latter of the two engagements with visual anthropology in this research. Archived photographs, sketches, and paintings become supplementary and are used through the thesis as examples both within the text and in appendices. The material aspect of the visual complicates how we consider the means of conveying materiality through visuality. Of great interest to me is the effect that paintings and photographs by colonial artists and anthropologists have on contemporary artists, craftspeople, and Indigenous makers (Edwards 1999; Pinney 2012; Vervoort 2004). If the visual and the material are valued points of access to understanding culture, how do Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities interact with the material representations of their own culture after experiencing an external culture? This question alone is not unique and has been contemplated (and complicated) by scholars at length (Bataille 2001; Bell 1982; Bhabha 1994; Francis 1992; Gaudio 2008; Green 1973; Mandel 1987; Mihelich 2001; Phillips 2004; Pratt 1992; Shoat and Stam; Townsend-Gault 2004). In the context of this ethnographic examination of woollen blankets, however, we find the visual and material representations of one's own culture being articulated through the transformation of woollen blankets. The multiple uses of material culture in the context of my project moves us closer to looking at how material and visual culture is "a way of countering colonial legacies" (Buchli 2002; Phillips 2012).

For example, in *Accelerating Possessions* (2006) Marilyn Strathern draws on Eduardo Viveros de Castro's work as a means of tracing knowledge production and cosmological specificity; more specifically she, too, draws on Susanne Kuechler's use of

the term “knowledge technology” that captures ideas of ownership of the tangible and intangible. In my project I take this insight to task across all field site paradigms to explore how the tangible and intangible knowledge that defines, creates, and sustains cultural heritage is created, transformed, and imagined. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, the placement of heraldic clan images on woollen blankets in Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures participates in defining cosmological specificity in two ways. First, it is a central cultural act of creating personal and clan property. And second, it can also stand in as a way of mapping kinship and personal identity. In other contexts, the placement of images, signs, or icons on woollen blankets whereby they have been transformed into a new object also represents the production of knowledge around national identity. For this we can use the example of craft items from Chapter Two where the placement of a symbol/icon of so-called “Kiwi Culture” or a place name specific to Aotearoa New Zealand participates in articulating not only a local aesthetic, but a related sense of knowing place. In this instance, and in relation to Strathern’s ideas around knowledge production, I argue that the placement of images and symbols on to woollen blankets makes visible two things: (1) it makes the blanket apparent because the symbol/image and the blanket are two separate materials that together make the other one visible and valuable through their proximity; and (2) the hybrid manifestation of histories articulated through materials activates discussion of cultural heritage and knowledge as is traced out in Chapter Four through a discussion of metaphors.

Anthropologist Victor Buchli traces the uses and the study of objects and cultural production from Michel Foucault to Karl Marx, by drawing together the shifting contexts in which material culture has been integral to Anthropology more

specifically bringing to focus how the *cultures who* produce and the *cultures who consume* align and diverge at critical historical moments and in distinct locales. The multiple uses of material culture in the context of my project then aims to look at how material culture is "a way of countering colonial legacies" (Buchli 2002). By challenging not only how materials function but also the role(s) of materiality in all field sites is part of understanding how the social and biographical narratives emerge through points of difference and alliance (Buchli 2002).

According to Alfred Gell, "the objective of the anthropological theory of art," which this thesis is part of contributing to, "is to account for the production and circulation of art objects", but it is the production, consumption, and circulation that I argue makes up the process of transformation—an integral part to understanding *things* from an anthropological perspective (Gell 1998: 11). Gell notes within his foundational work in *The Art of Anthropology* (1999) that "*transformation*" is critical to a system of action where understanding uses of materials and associated values can be found. In this case, creative transformations and the specifics of local aesthetics is concerned with how *things*, materials, objects, and artefacts work and "how they achieve what it is they are meant to achieve in their cultural context" (Coote and Shelton 1992: 9).

Aesthetics and Context

"Aesthetics is the form of discursive thought which intervenes to turn mere objects into works of art" (Gell 1995: 27). Building on this, Susanne Kuechler writes, "[a]nthropology's relation to aesthetics is defined by the discipline's methodological philistinism (Gell 1992) as it questions how forms under which human experience is

presented come to be and what they do to the socialised mind" (Kuechler 2014: 1). Extending from Aristotle's analysis of art and its ability to evoke emotion, the working understanding and application of aesthetics in this thesis is applied strictly to materials and matter that have been creatively transformed. Matthew Rampley writes in relation to Emanuel Kant's work that "[c]entral to Kant's notion of aesthetic experience is the exercise of creative fantasy in which the free play of imagination and understanding results in a game of identification and misidentification" (Rampley 2000: 142). Therefore, 'aesthetic transformation' in this thesis means the creative action on woollen blankets that in turn evokes sensory experiences or cultural responses to materials as they relate to specific localities. By asking what is there to be learned about culture through the aesthetic (experience) transformations (actions, process, and systems) of materials (woollen blankets), this dimension of this thesis is critical to framing how materials can move anthropological understanding beyond the biography of an object or the social life of a *thing*. To be clear, this study is not an assessment either of or concerning the beauty of woollen blankets or the quality of object they are transformed into. As Nicholas Thomas notes, "[t]he anthropologist is not obliged to define the art object […]" (Thomas 1998: 7).[9] Therefore, in this study one of my central foci has been on seeking out woollen blankets that have been transformed into a new *thing*—art or otherwise. It is important to note that transformed materials have been identified by those who work with blankets and refer to their own work as art, craft, or customary art, or by the systems (cultural and economic) in which these individuals exist. And since I am not an art critic whose job it

[9] George Deveraux noted that "[t]he anthropologist must study the grammar, syntax, and even the chosen vocabulary of art" (Deveraux 1961: 198). His argument of knowing art through the senses greatly influenced my own primary research, and the discussion of the sensorial, or sublimation of the senses, as addressed in Chapter Four.

is to judge the aesthetic merit of art objects in terms of historical philosophical debates on beauty, I approach this research by acknowledging, as Gell does in the formation of his anthropological theory of art, that "[a]esthetic judgments are only interior mental acts" (Gell 1998:3). Rather, it is the production and circulation of art objects in "the external physical and social world" where anthropologists must look for a deeper understanding of *how* creative transformations of materials become things and objects that participate in "sustained social processes […], which are connected to other social processes such as exchange, politics, religion, kinship, and production of cultural heritage" (Gell 1998:3).

Production & Distribution (Brief History of Blankets)

Like Johannes Fabian's work, this material ethnography takes up a somewhat historical approach to 'demonstrate the emergence, transformation and differentiation' of uses and interpretations of woollen blankets (Fabian 2002). This is traced out more in depth in the following section on the multi-site dimension of this project. It has been well-studied that the blanket trade is perhaps, as Marshall Sahlins might call it, the 'starting mechanism' that acts to 'initiate new social relations' around materials (Sahlins 1963). Trade, so to speak, the first movement in setting this material in motion within our material world. In this sense, Gell's idea that "[m]anufactured objects are 'caused' by their makers" (Gell 1998: 24) is pertinent to foregrounding the early moments of when and where woollen blankets began as a technology of enchantment, or a material that captivates.

The types of woollen blankets considered in this research are introduced through examples presented in this thesis, as are their manufacturing histories.

However, the original type of woollen blankets that started this investigation were produced at the Witney Mills in Oxfordshire, England since the mid-seventeenth century until the mill officially closed down in 2002. Harold Tichenor has produced the most concise history on woollen blankets, specifically the Hudson's Bay Company Point blankets (2002; 2003). To avoid repeating all of his work here, my abbreviated summary of production and manufacture is strictly to preface the deeper histories of global circulation to settler states as they emerge throughout this thesis in relation to specific makers and the new forms they make from woollen blankets.

Today the woollen blankets are mass manufactured in Manchester and Leeds in the United Kingdom. Historically, though, the Witney Mills is the starting point for many of the blankets that have appeared around the globe and in settler states since the seventeenth century when it first opened. Beyond the Whitney Mills, however, blanket mills started to appear with the establishment of communities in settler states, and with that varied blanket patterns began to saturate the blanket market. The history of regional mills will be presented in each chapter when talking specifically about blankets in works of art, craft, or a specific piece of Indigenous regalia. The colour of the blanket's field and any additional patterns or markings has always been dependent upon the mill that manufactured them. Since the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the presence of blankets in different colours, patterns, and quality increased as weaving mills were technologically revolutionised in England; eventually many mills were set-up across Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand, and with it new communities flourished. [10] "While the blankets were and are signature

[10] Other blanket field colours including, but not limited to, red, blue, pale green, and navy had a more historical presence during the height of the fur trade in North America (as will be

products of their mill, generally speaking, the mills in both North America and in the Antipodes operated on technology that emerged during the mechanisation of the blanket industry in the United Kingdom, which was spurred on by the Industrial Revolution" (McDonald 2013: 108). The distribution of woollen blankets manufactured in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand tended to have more of a regional distribution when compared to the global reach that Witney blankets originally had.

The consistency of manufacture to produce the basic essential qualities of the woollen blanket is what has enabled it to be legible to numerous audiences for over three centuries. Its legibility as a *thing*—a woollen blanket—is where we begin when looking further at critical material assessment of the meanings and values that foreground the "cognitive stickiness" of woollen blankets within various social contexts and at distinct historical moments (Gell 1992).

The Blanket as a "Technology of Enchantment"

The woollen blanket is by all forms of evaluation clearly a product of industrialised technology that was used to systematically transform raw wool into a

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explored later in this chapter), whereas the purple woollen blanket with the white band and markings (see Figure 1) was created by Whitney Mills in England to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. In "'Making Sense Out/Of the Visual': Aboriginal Presentations and Representations in Nineteenth-Century Canada," Ruth B. Phillips comments that "throughout the fur trade era, red woolen cloth was preferred because of its analogic relationship to red ochre and indigenous scarlet dyes" (Phillips 2004: 606). The red colour that Phillips mentions is "Turke Red." According to "Textiles from the Fur Trade: A Textiles Glossary for the York Factory Indents, 1801 to 1860" turke red was: "a bright durable red dye for cotton and wool cloth originally made from madder and later from alizarian in connection with an aluminum mordant and fatty matter. The earliest date cited in the OED was 1784. The 1830 York Factory indent listed "1032 yds. Turked red and Blue stripe cotton Druggets" ("Textiles From the Fur Trade: A Textiles Glossary for the York Factory Indents, 1801 to 1860," found at the Royal Alberta Museum Archives Search File: Fur Trade Textiles).

manufactured product. When we trace back to the seventeenth century the application of "technology" in the English language, we learn that its emergence from Greek *tekhnologia* means the 'systematic treatment,' and *tekhnē* meaning 'art, craft'. Blankets by this root definition are the byproduct of technology in that they emerged from the art and craft of blanket making in a pre-industrial moment, and later were refined through the systematic industrialised treatment of wool into a felted material. But how does the blanket, a derivative of technology, become the technology that enchants?

We live in an ever transforming and transformative world: one where the impermanence of *things* allows us to know the past and imagine the future of *things.* In this act of imagining our material world *things* are called into being, and also called into being something else. Through this process of calling and transforming, I argue, is where the material enchants makers in their creative human action in the manufacture of artworks, craftworks, and Indigenous regalia as apparatuses of understanding social process, or more specifically as Alfred Gell's 'Technologies of Enchantment' (Gell 1998). Looking at three distinct modalities of change manifest through aesthetic actions, transformation is an appropriate paradigm for examining creative human action through both Indigenous and non-Indigenous interventions on woollen blankets.

But do the materials used in the artwork have enchanting properties too or is it just the artwork, the artefact, the object that enchants? Taking in to consideration Alfred Gell's foundational work on the anthropology of art, in a contemporary context his positioning of 'art as a technical system' establishes a framework to consider the creative phenomenon identified in this material ethnography that concentrates on the use of

woollen blankets.[11] Gell notes that "[a]s a technical system, art is oriented towards the production of the social consequences which ensue from the production of these objects" (Gell 1999: 163). If this is the case, then it is the response(s) to the artistic production(s) that becomes vital in this investigation and will be evidenced in the oral histories of the producers, peers, and contemporaries of the artists being interviewed to trace biographic relations that are elicited through material culture. If, as Gell posited, "[t]he power of art objects stems from the technical process they objectively embody: the *technology of enchantment* is found in the *enchantment of technology*" (Gell 1999: 163), then with the artworks considered in this investigation, how then are the responses of the beholder a reflection of the power of the object itself or the materials that constitute its existence?

Over the past ten years, the number of contemporary artists in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand working with woollen trade blankets in their art suggests that there is a phenomenon coalescing around the transformation of woollen blankets.[12] The efficacy and consequence of each work is derived from its co-existence with similar works of art or objects that situates the source of this phenomenon (Keane 2010). According to Amiria Salmond, who cites Boast and colleagues in "Return to Babel: Emergent diversity, digital resources, and local knowledge" (Salmond 2007), "[i]ndividuals within a given community attach different descriptions to shared phenomena, and they need to continue to describe the world differently … These different descriptions – these

[11] Gell notes "[t]he anthropology of art cannot be the study of the aesthetic principles of this or that culture, but of the mobilization of aesthetic principles in the course of social interaction" (Gell 1998: 5).

[12] The nature of this project is multi-sited and therefore comparing sites allows for the phenomenon to become more apparent. George Marcus notes that "[t]he object of study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated, so any ethnography of such an object will have a comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) 'worlds apart'" (Marcus 1995: 102).

contrasting and fluid ontologies … are the ontological keys that unlock the doors to diverse, rich, and incommensurable knowledge communities. They are … diverse 'ways of knowing' about the world and are necessary to organise, find and use information. (Boast *et al*. 2007: 399)" (Salmond 2012: 211). Therefore, through either the literal re-working or the visual re-representation of woollen blankets, this 'technical system of enchantment' has made visible an area of inquiry for anthropological consideration that asks what this phenomenon means to the process of social transformation and the engagement or activation of memories—personal and social.[13] This phenomenon is the foundation upon which my central question rests: are woollen blankets mnemonic devices that navigate biographical relations in our current historical moment? This social phenomenon has become visually apparent through material transformations in the past decade but emerges from a social structure that has a historical "inheritance" (Mintz 1985). This historicity of engagement can be the means of eliciting memories associated with the concept of the blanket as well as the materiality of the blanket within specific communities. The theoretical framework of the anthropology of memory is discussed later in this thesis.

For example, since the late-seventeenth century, woollen blankets brought to settler states as a primary trade good of the Hudson's Bay Company have consequently become one of the most visibly documented material trade items in imagery from the late-seventeenth until the early-twentieth centuries in North America. Further to their introduction in Canada, rival-trading companies in the United States relied on local woollen mills out of Pendleton, Oregon to produce similar textiles

[13] Colin Campbell suggests that: "A satisfactory theory contains a statement of the relative significance that should be attached to each identified element, together with a precise specification of how they interact to produce the phenomenon to be explained" (Campbell 1997: 43).

to vie for trade. The shift from colonial paintings to the presence of woollen blankets in contemporary art stands in a poetic relationship to the historical visibility of this serviceable tool found in numerous visual representations from the colonial trade era that discretely document the woollen blanket and its subtle movement into different landscapes and cultures. [14]

In the several examples from colonial visual culture that follow, the woollen blanket has been captured, and to a certain extent romanticised, in trade interactions staged in sublime landscapes between European traders and Indigenous groups and staged studio settings.

In North America, for example, paintings done by Paul Kane (1810-1871) (FIGURE 3) and Cornelius Kreighoff (1815-1872) (FIGURE 2) that romanticise distinct North American landscapes, woollen blankets appear naturalised in scenes of trade and exchange, as well as critical objects in outerwear such as jackets. Similarly, in Aoteaora New Zealand, artists aboard ships captained by James Cook (1728-1779) rendered similar scenes of men and women wrapped in blankets, and later William Strutt (1825-1915) (FIGURE 4), Gottfried Lindauer (1839-1926), and Charles Frederick Goldie (1870–1947) (FIGURE 5) painted varied portraits with Māori men and women wrapped in plaid woollen blankets that are now treasured items in national art and archive collections.

From these colonial images, more recent works by contemporary artists challenge or are positioned in relation to historical meta-narratives and visualisations

[14] Such extensive visibility through various media has overshadowed the participation of numerous other trading companies intimately involved in the Canadian fur trade throughout the last three centuries. For example, the North West Company, with its home base in Montréal, competed with the Hudson's Bay Company for access through Hudson Bay until they officially merged in 1821.

that incorporate the woollen blanket. A deeper discussion of the many artists who have used the woollen blanket as a ready-made object in their works is presented in Chapter One.

FIGURE 2. Cornelius Kreighoff. *The Trader.* 1850.
Oil on canvas. 45.5 x 60.6 cm.
From: Art Gallery of Hamilton, gift of Mrs. C.H. Stearn, 1957 (1966.75.0)

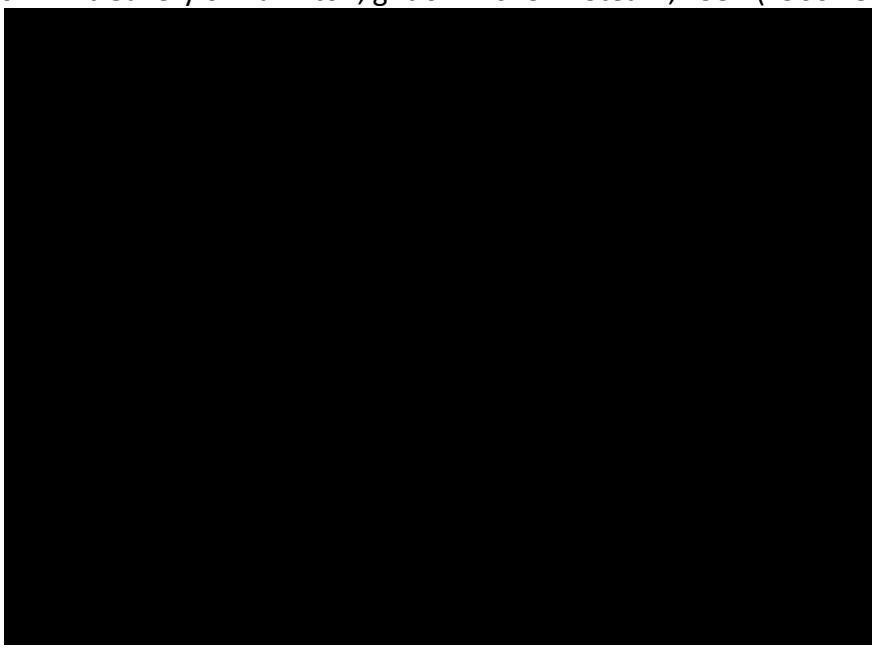


FIGURE 3. Paul Kane. ***Scene in the Northwest.* c. 1845-46.**
Oil on Canvas. The collection of Ken and Marilyn Thomson.
From: *The Globe and Mail* (24 December 2003): A1

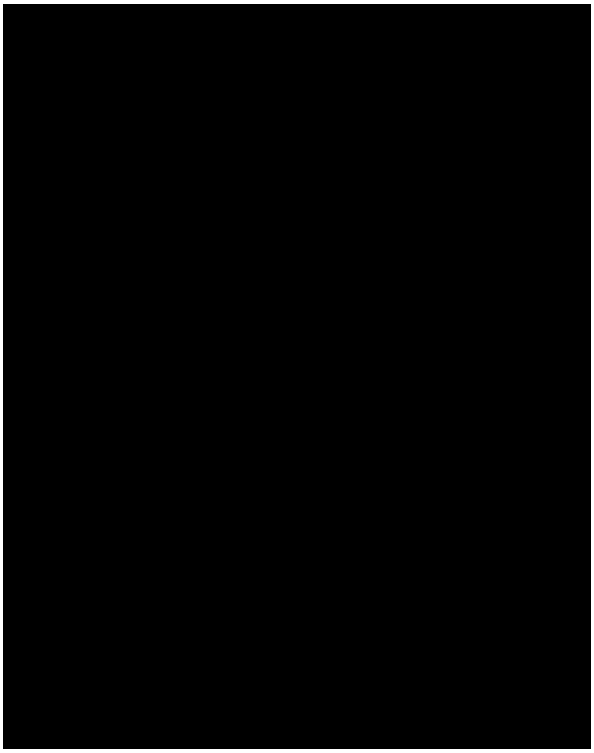


FIGURE 4. William Strutt. *Native girl from the Wiria's [?] pah, Taranaki*. 1856.
Water colour, pencil, and wash.
From: Alexander Turnbull Library, New Zealand. Reference Number: E-452-f-009-2

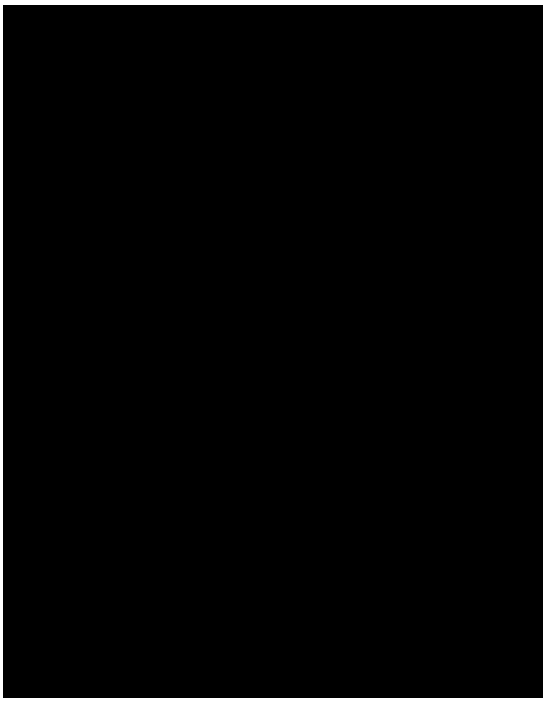


FIGURE 5. Charles Frederick Goldie
***Memories: Ena Te Papatahi, a Chieftainess of the Ngapuhi Tribe*. 1906.**
Oil on Canvas. From: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki.
Bequest of Emily and Alfred Nathan, 1952

As a preview, however, since the mid-1980s, woollen blankets started to appear both literally and figuratively in works of art by several practicing artists in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. In the context of this discussion, only two examples are presented here in the Introduction to reflect upon how artists have *literally* transformed one or more woollen blankets. As Arthur Danto's argument suggests in Chapter One and as I summarise here, in relation to the power material objects possess in conveying meaning and value, indicates that works of art where artists use woollen blankets in their raw material form can enable a clearer presentation of some of the meanings that have been appropriated.[15]

Again, as Arthur Danto once observed, "[b]y bringing into their works objects and materials with often powerful meanings in lived forms of life, artists have been able to appropriate those meanings for their art, and even to communicate with audiences in ways considerably beyond what pictorial representation would allow" (Danto 2002: 84). Therefore, through the literal incorporation of woollen blankets into their works of art, how does such a material engagement within the context of an art gallery allow audiences access to other values, meanings, and histories of woollen blankets beyond their own lived experiences?

Critical Research Questions

From the few abbreviated historical examples above (that are explored more in depth in Chapter One) it is evident that a material ethnography of this nature enlivens

[15] In a further act of clarification about what works are presented in this thesis, Nicholas Thomas argues that "[t]he anthropologist is not obliged to define the art object"; therefore, in the context of this discussion the simple fact that the blanket appears in a sculptural work that has been exhibited in a gallery context and been called art by the maker has informed its reference as a work of art in this thesis (Thomas 1998: 7).

the need for many questions that float around the role and use of woollen blankets today. These questions are presented here to show the relevance of my research questions across, and specific to, each modality of transformation and field site. In addition to this, it is important to note that in asking questions about a *thing*, there is also a tendency for such a study to define its object of study (Mintz 1985).

So at the outset, I found myself questioning what was it about a woollen blanket that has invited so much simultaneous imaginative actions upon it? From this, how does the woollen blanket become such a rich "surface of continual interchange" (Ingold 2013)? This ties in with Baudrillard's questioning about what are the multivalent applications of everyday objects (Baudrillard 1996: 92)? The other supplementary questions are as follows. First, across all three types of transformations, how do the materials used in the artwork have enchanting properties, too, or is it just the artwork, the artefact, the object that enchants? This moves along in Chapter Two towards questioning how the modalities of understanding, knowing, and articulating cultural heritage at each site is articulated through the materials that moves through the "social community of craft", art, and Indigenous cultural property (Stevens 2011: 53)? In Chapter Three, the questions move further to probe the multiplicity of roles that the woollen blankets have and continue to serve at a single event begs the question of value—what values are imbued in the blanket? Finally, Chapter Four turns to look back across all three field sites to understand how is the woollen blanket an extension of human experience between maker and viewer that contains the message (or a concept) to create a metaphor? And how, through metaphors, is meaning made through the sensory synaesthetic, experience with woollen blankets? What is the sentient material experience with woollen blankets?

Over a three hundred year period that culminates in the present, the questions are many given the vast utilisation of woollen blankets and its shifting meaning(s) in multiple cultural contexts. Within various contexts, for example, it has gone from being a trade item to a commodity of economic status and a source of cultural expression in many Tlingit communities of Alaska, the Yukon, British Columbia, and along the Pacific Northwest, as well as the urban and rural centres of across the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, and in art galleries across Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. What constitutes knowledge, though, in the context of woollen blankets?

In the absence of any anthropological investigation concerning use and movement of woollen blankets, this thesis engages with the practice of comparative looking. By this my mean, looking to various sites and posing the aforementioned questions to understand more completely where and how the aesthetic transformations of woollen blankets takes place simultaneously in our contemporary moment. This approach is taken up in order to seek out a deeper understanding of how and why woollen blankets have remained relatively unconsidered yet are clearly entrenched in communities even if passively in their material existence. The "comparison emerges from putting questions to an emergent object of study whose contours, sites, and relationships are not known beforehand, but are themselves a contribution of making an account that has different, complexly connected real-world sites of investigation" (Marcus 1995: 102). The questions that frame this study focus upon how the transformation process of blankets factors into the circulation of materials and knowledge in our material world to push our thinking beyond current frameworks that look mostly at the consumption of commodities to understand more

deeply the subsequent phases of use materials have in relation to larger world systems of economics, art, craft, and Indigenous intellectual property. And finally, what is it about the material qualities and properties of a woollen blanket that allows it to be acted upon as a "space of continual interchange" in the construction of cultural heritage for over three hundred years in various places around the globe (Ingold 2013)?

Overall, my core questions really emerged during fieldwork at each site. In this thesis they stand together in order to allow me to trace out more completely what the theoretical implications are of looking at transformation as part of the process of circulation. In doing so, what emerges is how woollen blankets, a derivative of technology, becomes a technology that enchants?

Multi-sited Research and Mobility of Materials and the Ethnographer

Empirically my fieldwork, as the title of this thesis invites, is a qualitative study that charts the spaces and places where woollen blankets have touched down historically and presently. A large part of how one charts such instances is a matter of discovery and serendipity, coupled with networking.[16] A strong historical dimension buttresses my contemporary ethnography. As Susan M. Pearce argues "the importance of both anthropology (ethnography) and history is that, when applied to the analysis of the construction of knowledge, they offer the possibility of deriving theories of materialism and identity which are more than parochially based generalisations"

[16] During one of my first days in the field in Aotearoa New Zealand a quilter in Wellington who was interested in my work asked me "how are you going to meet people?" I shared with her that my method of discovery has a lot to do with relying on past networks to see where new connections can be found. She laughed and said, "Yes, New Zealand works exactly like that. Your work will flourish here simply because you *get* us" (11 December 2010).

(Pearce 1997: 29). Therefore, in an attempt to push beyond generalisations and to capture fully the global imbeddedness of materials in our material world, this project spans multiple sites within three geographically defined field sites.

With the nature of this project as multi-sited, the non-reductive but rather focused comparative looking at the modalities of transformation between and across field sites allows for the phenomenon to become more apparent. George Marcus notes that "[t]he object of study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated, so any ethnography of such an object will have a comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) 'worlds apart'" (Marcus 1995: 102). Again, Marcus's work is critical to my goal to articulate further a well-structured model for multi-sited research. He notes, "[m]ulti-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography" (Marcus 1995: 105). This logic was rooted in the paths that woollen blankets have moved across time to places that, consequently, required my movement within multiple related sites in three countries—Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. The initial specificity of each site was based on historical research of the global distribution of objects from England sent abroad. The persistence and sustained presence of these blankets in our contemporary moment begat a more critical assessment of the relatedness of these as former colonial states, and their participation with global world systems of art, economics, and politics.

At the outset of this project, my supervisory committee asked me, like George Marcus has asked of his readers, “is multi-sited fieldwork practical?” for a project of this nature. My answer was always ‘yes’. First, my core research questions necessitated looking at multiple sites in order for a “comparative translation and tracing among sites” that would map out *how* the creative transformation of materials is a critical process in the extended theories of movement around the circulation of materials (Marcus 1995). Second, it was critical to observing the phenomenon of use of woollen blankets today at multiple sites so that the juxtapositions of uses also validated the need for movement of myself as an ethnographer across sites. Third, the need for studying blankets within multiple cultural spaces was buttressed by the logic that in order to deeply understand how materials move in our material world, that my movement was necessary. And finally, the extant examples of material ethnographies had already successfully set a precedent (Bayly 1988; Macfarlane and Macfarlane 2003; Mintz 1985; Myers 1986, 2002) where the specificity of use of materials between disparate sites and cultures has been critical to articulating a more comprehensive anthropological understanding of the signs, symbols, and metaphors that accumulate on materials, objects, and artefacts.

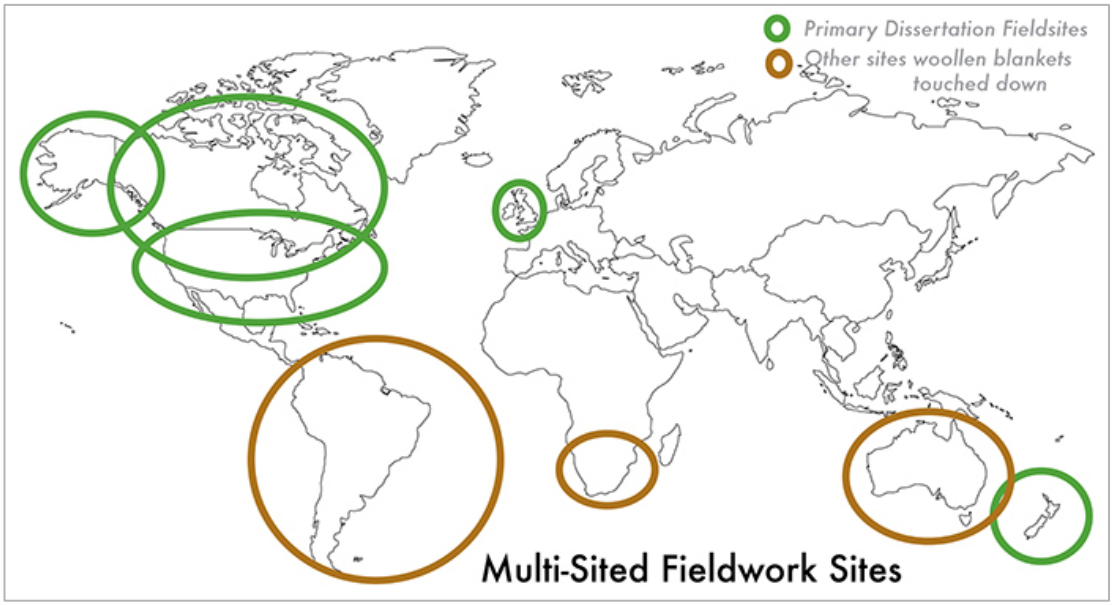
With the committee’s blessing to undertake a multi-sited project, it was agreed that the boundaries of what would be studied specifically at each site would need to be organically defined from the field (MAP 1). Therefore, as Simon Coleman and Peter Collins note, the “ethnographic ‘habitus’ of remaining as open as possible to the unpredictable and the informal in social life” was absolutely critical to the success of this project (Coleman and Collins 2006: 12). In order to ensure data was collected systematically, my project was designed to engage with participant observation, semi-

structured interviews, and archival research. These are my main research methods. This thesis emerges from twenty months of multi-sited research at distinct field sites within Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Between June 2010 and July 2012 (with four months away from the field during this period), systematic data was collected across all field sites from participant observations, digitally recorded semi-structured interviews with informed consent (see APPENDIX 1),[17] archival research within all sites including the Oxfordshire Regional archives in England, and object analysis within museums. Additionally, a critical part of my methodology was allowing time to think, process, and observe my own research through the course of this investigation. This was then buttressed by secondary sources referenced as a means of cross-referencing understandings of materials by exploring artist statements, curatorial essays, academic publications. In addition to this I integrated "virtuality into my ethnography" (Trembley 2014) by extending field research into online forums such as Facebook and blog sites as this related to understanding the role "virtual networked environments" have in the context of an extended field site from the craft markets in Aotearoa New Zealand (Boellstorff et al. 2012: 7; Miller 2007).

Due to previous experiences of living, studying, and working in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, and previous site visits to the United States, I was able to establish networks prior to going to the field. These relationships facilitated in managing my time effectively in the field and organising my research across multiple sites. In moving from site to site (or, rather, country to country) I allowed myself the time to recalibrate to the various cultural contexts, spaces, and reinsert myself within

[17] Interviews were a critical part of this primary fieldwork research. Extensive training at UCL prepared me to conduct semi-structured interviews within homes, galleries, institutions, markets, studios, and online. See APPENDIX 1 for documentation of informed consent for both interviews and overall participation in this research project.

existing networks or allow myself time for formal introductions (Marcus 1995: 113). In the short periods of time between transitioning between sites, normally about two weeks, I used this space to flesh out some of my field notes, organise my data (photographs, archival material, sound recordings, transcriptions, etc), and take note of how the boundaries of that field site had defined themselves. All interviews were conducted in my mother tongue, English, also the *lingua franca* of all my field sites. In addition to this, previous language training in *Te Re Māori* (2006-2007) in Aotearoa New Zealand and *Lingít* (Tlingit) language studied while in the field in Alaska assisted in understanding and translating complex cultural concepts around Indigenous material culture. In Alaska, support in language translation from Katrina Hotch, Nora Marks Dauenharer, and Dick Dauenhauer were invaluable.



MAP 1. Multi-Sited Fieldwork Sites. 2014. Designed by Fiona P. McDonald

Alfred Gell, who cites Lévi-Strauss (who in turn was citing Dorsy 1894) notes, "[e]verything as it moves, here and there, makes stops (Dorsey 1894, cited in Lévi-

Strauss 1964: 98)" (Chau and Elliott 2013: 97).[18] So if the material stops, so too must the ethnographer. It is these stops where woollen blankets, through their global movement as a commodity since the seventeenth century, have touched down that defined the larger field sites in this investigation. When these woollen blankets have touched down, their specific uses in various social and cultural contexts have participated in mediating social relations, defining networks, and articulating new cultural practices. The global distribution of woollen blankets for over three hundred years has presented multiple stops for woollen blankets from Africa to India, Australia to Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as Canada and the United States. But the subsequent phases of use of blankets beyond their role as a serviceable textile today has drawn attention to their use in art, craft, design, and Indigenous regalia in three specific sites. As Clifford Brown suggests, by looking at the transformative acts that shift things into objects we gain a better understanding of the circulation of materials across cultures and time (Brown 2001: 4). At the macro level, this study considers the transformation of woollen blankets at global scale to focus upon three key sites within Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. By looking within each of these sites to a deeper level has allowed for a more comprehensive study of the local uses of woollen blankets in relation to the global circulation of materials. Therefore, this study is not reduced to field sites, *per se*, it is organised by distinct types of transformations. These specific types of transformations are what define the first three chapters as ethnographic studies of material transformations within: (1) Chapter One:

[18] Interestingly, after returning from the field and going through notes I was reacquainted by a quote Nicholas Thomas had made from his research in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1990s. It was striking how similar our two experiences were. "After my first day, my 'fieldwork' almost immediately became a breathless series of gallery visits, interviews, meetings, dinners, openings and parties—I hasten to add that it featured some long days in archives and in gallery and museum stores too […]" (Thomas 1999: 233).

Contemporary Art; (2) Chapter Two: Contemporary Craft; and (3) Chapter Three: Contemporary Indigenous Regalia. Each of these specific transformations of blankets into a new cultural object allows for a clearer articulation of the local uptake of materials in relation to its historical presence and imagined futurity.

Similar to scholars such as sociologist Judy Attfield, I, too, wish to avoid any sort of reductionism in this project and have treated all sites of investigation equitably during fieldwork research through systematic looking and defined methods of data collection. I did not enter the field looking to fit an understanding of woollen blankets into a theory, but rather wanted to let theory emerge from where the phenomenon of use might 'engender a theory'. In this case, moving forward how we think about materials through their transformations (Henere et al 2007: 5). Therefore my operational approach to framing this thesis is such that the methods from the field bring forth a complete focus upon three specific types of aesthetic transformations upon a woollen blanket in order to garner new knowledge about how materials participate within the larger cosmological frameworks of those carrying out actions on materials at multiple sites (Attfield 2000: 34). And, yes, I stumbled often along the way as I learned from artists and craftspeople who are working with woollen blankets precisely how materials factor into the skill and larger classificatory systems and processes of art and craft.

The focus upon the transformative acts allows for an expansion of thought when understanding the meaning behind the specific uses, transformations, contexts, and historical specificity of materials. Because of previous experience in all three field sites prior to this investigation, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the United States became apparent as the broader frames for this investigation. In essence, it was the

asymmetry between sites that was instrumental in tracing out the distinct types of transformations acted upon woollen blankets, and subsequently in illuminating the complexity of the material, and the larger theoretical scope of this thesis that looks at the process of transformation. Comparative looking between sites is nothing new in anthropology, and comparative historical studies between nations that share colonial histories are also not new (Myers 2001). In particular, studies between Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand are often central in illuminating greater understanding of historical injustices of colonially subjugated societies (Brown and Nicholas 2012; Merry and Brenneis 2004: 7). As Sally Engle Merry and Donald Brenneis's study into legal practices between Fiji and Hawai'i demonstrates, "comparison [...] points to complexity and intersections" where new understandings of social transformation of self as material being and of materials can emerge through the production of cultural heritage (Merry and Brenneis 2004: 6).

While each of the field sites (Canada, United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand) have received, in various ways, much anthropological attention in the study of their respective Indigenous cultures, my study adds new knowledge around the movement of material culture through all of these sites and all of the respective cultures.

Thematic Organisation of Dissertation

This thesis is organised in such a way as to map out at the start a more synoptic view of woollen blankets that clearly captures the phenomenon of transforming woollen blankets within local aesthetic traditions. These three types of transformations are contemporary art, craft, and Indigenous regalia. Through the

presentation of data, the various transformations continually tie together the more critical threads that run throughout this research that are: (1) production of cultural heritage; (2) the mnemonic values of materials; and (3) the imagined potential in the futurity of our material world. Several tables, figures, and diagrams are positioned through this thesis and are used to visualise the plura-potentiality of a woollen blanket to understand larger anthropological investigations in to value, economies, property, politics, kinship, identities, and value.

Chapter One is a concise presentation of several examples of contemporary artworks by makers that incorporate one or more woollen blankets into a new aesthetic form. The transformation of blankets into works of art spans across all field sites in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. This chapter is the largest of the three case studies of use in this thesis in terms of its global scope of the examples. In this chapter looking at a woollen blanket as a "ready-made" material for art allows for a larger contextualisation of materials within contemporary art in the context of the global Indigenous art movement. The more theoretical discussion in this chapter emerges from Gell's anthropology of art.

Chapter Two is a focused presentation of the transformation of woollen blankets in contemporary craft markets in Aotearoa New Zealand. The regional specificity of this chapter moves the conversation deeper to look at local histories, local aesthetic traditions, and the political role of materials in articulating national identity. In this chapter, a more complex anthropological discussion emerges around the act of recycling and Corrine A. Kratz's study (1995) of the notion of "recyclia" in art and craft that brings about a discussion of networks of engagement and local economies.

Moving into another example of use that also documents a localised aesthetic, Chapter Three focuses upon the use of woollen blankets in Tlingit culture in Southeast Alaska and the role of woollen blankets in ceremonial regalia known as button (blanket) robes. This chapter presents data from an oral history project in Juneau, Alaska that looks at the shifting values of clan and private property in Tlingit culture as it relates to regalia, as well as the legacy of the use of woollen blankets in light of the introduction of more lightweight synthetic materials in the creation of new Indigenous regalia today.

The fourth and final chapter returns us to looking critically at all three types of aesthetic transformations in the first three chapters in order to distill where the mnemonic values associated with woollen blankets emerge across time and space, and the local significance of such values. By reflecting on all three transformations of woollen blankets, this chapter teases out some of the synaesthetic and multisensorial experiences that have participated as a driving force in framing the metaphorical and imagined values and qualities of blankets, and looking at the futurity of the woollen blanket in our material world.

Ethics and Collaboration

Acknowledging my own experiences as a material being within our material world was paramount when setting up the parameters for impartiality to the data I was collecting, as well as a point of relational understanding with my collaborators. In following a woollen blanket I entered into new social scenes, cultures, and contexts unfamiliar to me. My only point of connection, as I stated at the outset, was the primacy of experience a woollen blanket has as corporeal knowledge shared by all.

While I had had some previous experience in the contemporary art world having been an assistant curator in Aotearoa New Zealand, I did not have a robust knowledge of the craft market networks. Nor did I have any experience in Southeast Alaska with Tlingit communities. Again, it was the woollen blanket that led me there. This sort of methodological fetishism was critical to opening up a more global understanding of the three distinct case studies of use presented in this thesis and the people whose knowledge this research has benefited greatly from.

Travelling to various sites and working with artists, craftspeople, and Indigenous cultural leaders and elders, makers, and thinkers is a deeply engaging, confronting, and rewarding process. The unexpected intimacy of some situations in which prolonged hours in art market stalls, studios, ceremonial sites, or homes carrying out participant observations often resulted in opportunities to experience new spaces where the woollen blankets were being moved. In these instances, I was fortunate to be invited to work with these makers on projects that incorporated woollen blankets for either their private or public use. Throughout this thesis the names of all makers and thinkers with whom I worked are introduced by their full name with their permission and informed consent. All participants received three documents that were reviewed in full together before any recording devices were turned on or notes were made. Two copies of these documents were made—one for their personal records and one for my own. Sample copies of documents can be found in APPENDIX 1: (1) a formal letter outlining the scope of the project, the parameters of their participation, and an opportunity to leave the project at a later date; (2) an interviewee consent form that traced out their intellectual property rights and protection; and (3) an interviewer consent form that provided assurances for the

highest ethical treatment of their knowledge. In any instance where it was made clear that knowledge shared with me was for my personal insight and not to be incorporated into this research project, I have honoured those wishes completely. Where a collaborator wished to remain anonymous, this request has been respected. In most cases many of those who collaborated with me have prolific international profiles in contemporary art worlds, are revered elders in their community, and in other instances are well-regarded local entrepreneurs. Central to the success of this research was ensuring that all participants willingly volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with woollen blankets with me. If conversations were recorded and transcribed, copies were offered to participants.

Across all field sites I worked with men, women, and children from various communities, backgrounds, and ages within a variety of arenas. The diversity of these sites has greatly opened up clarity in understanding my own relationship as an anthropologist to studying our material world.

Conclusion

To summarise the work presented in this thesis is the core knowledge to emerge through this original investigation of materials to address a more comprehensive understanding of transformation as a critical stage in the circulation of our material world. In the examination of three distinct case studies of use that represent the aesthetic transformation of our material world, this thesis captures unique localised uptakes of woollen blankets that emerge from the larger global distribution and movement of blankets since the late-seventeenth century. As we move through this thesis we are reminded about the depth of knowledge to be found

in understanding the process of transformation and the cultural processes that take place when materials are transformed from a *thing* into an object, and object into an artefact, and artefact into a commodity, and a commodity into something open to fathom. And as the case studies of use make visible, what it is for each of us in our own respective cultures, about a woollen blanket that begs the imaginative act of being transformed for various social, cultural, political, and aesthetic purposes.

CHAPTER 1

WOOLLEN BLANKETS IN CONTEMPORARY ART
A GLOBAL CASE STUDY:
CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

"There is nothing wrong with a blanket. Just like the bible,
it is what people *do* with it that changes how we see it."
—gallery attendant, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand (2010)—

Locality—the artistic phenomenon

This chapter presents the first of three types of the creative aesthetic actions upon woollen blankets by looking specifically at the transformation of woollen blankets within contemporary art on a global scale. By tracing out "what people *do* with" woollen blankets in art, this chapter addresses not only the various sorts of aesthetic changes that have altered the form and function of a woollen blanket, but also points to intentionality on the part of artists in the construction and destruction of cultural heritage. In the first step of charting the current global reach of woollen blankets, the geo-spatial scope of this chapter is intentionally broad in order to capture the breadth of the movement of materials in order to tease out the specificities of the local aesthetic that emerge from creative human action within the global context of the art world (MAP 2 and MAP 3). Casting a wide lens in this first chapter is central to setting up a practical framework for the following chapters that document more regional and localised case studies.

The extensive coverage of this chapter is useful in drawing together a series of case studies of use within the world system of contemporary art by both Indigenous

and non-Indigenous artists. But it does not reduce them to a homogenous experience. Rather this broad-focus allows for the diversity and heterogeneity of voices and experiences, as we will see, of mostly Indigenous artists to be presented. As Diane Coole and Samantha Frost note, the "transformations [of materials] in the practice of art in recent decades has made […] meaning available to artists in realising works that draw on the meanings fabric possess in vernacular forms of life" (Coole and Frost 2010: 84). These meanings and significations shed great cultural insight in to *why* woollen blankets have been mobilised as an expression of cultural heritage, contestation, and identity through contemporary art.

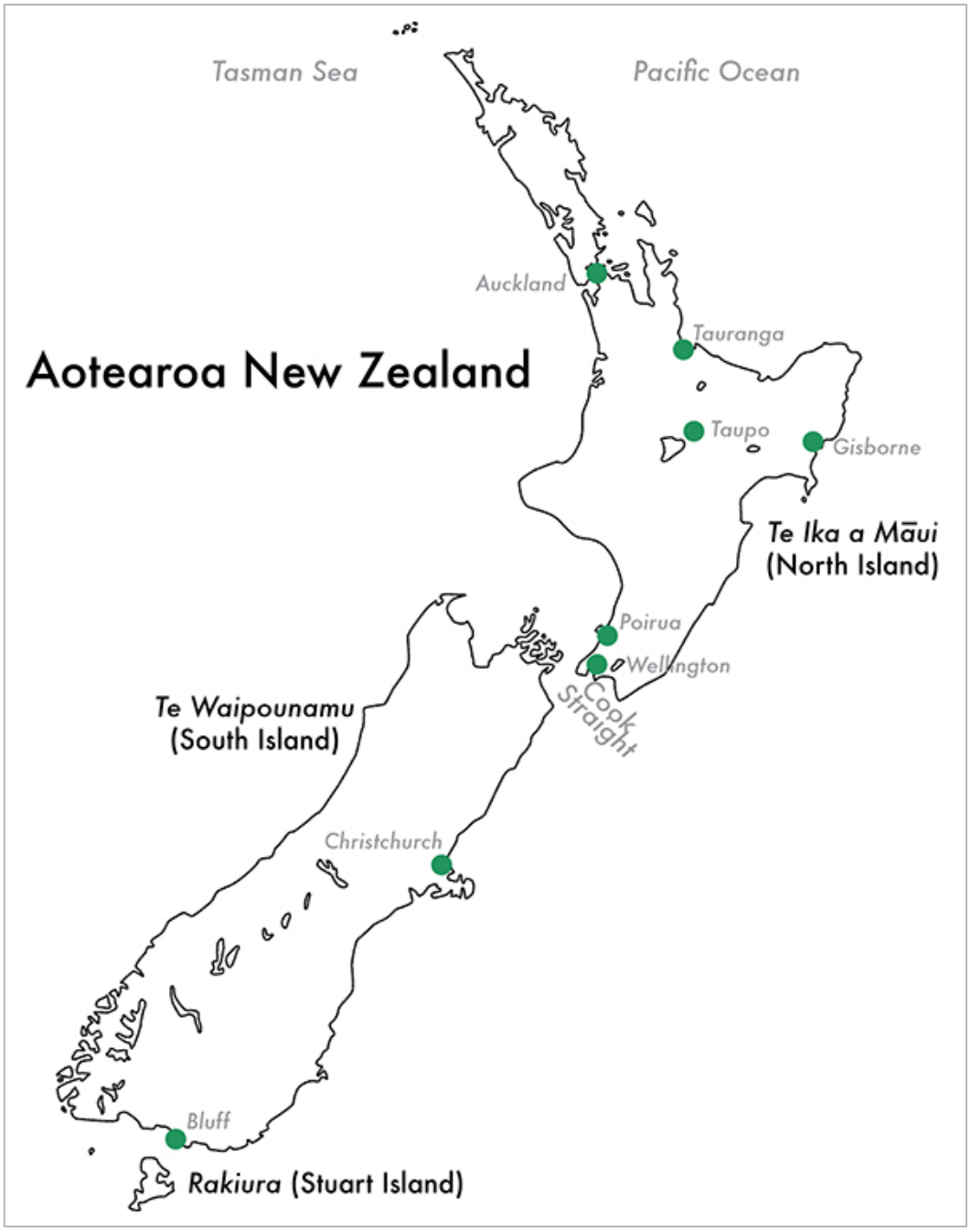
Art is a complicated and socially constructed classification and is by no means an "innocent category" (Fung 2002: 39, cf.; Spivak 1999; and Taylor 1998). The study of art "as a culturally defined interpretation of human experience" (Womac 2005: 111) is one of the richest areas of anthropological investigation. Grant Pooke and Diana Newell point out in relation to George Dickie's institutional theory of art (c.1974), that the criteria for art is that "an object or artifact has to have been changed by human agency or interaction" and that "the resulting object has to be acknowledged as art through formal exhibition or display, though not necessarily in a gallery context" (Pooke and Newell 2008: 176). However, as anthropologist Jacque Manquet notes, "location as indicator" is critical to understanding how cultures define art (Manquet 1986: 17). Further to this, Raymond Firth writes, "[a]rt as I see it is part of the result of attributing meaningful patterns to experience or imagined experience. It is primarily a matter of perception of order in relations, accompanied by a feeling of rightness in that order, not necessarily pleasurable or beautiful, but satisfying some inner recognition of values" (Firth 1992: 16).

So how then is art defined in this ethnography of materials? Throughout this chapter I draw from several anthropological perspectives addressed in the Introduction that are derived mostly from key works by Alfred Gell, Nicholas Thomas, and Fred R. Myers. Their foundational ideas have furthered disciplinary understandings of value in framing the complexity of identifying an 'anthropological theory of art' that allows me to also argue for art as a socially constructed framework whereby materials are set at a distance from viewers that often creates new values and stimulates the dynamic for cognitive contemplation. In this way, through materials, art exposes histories (as well as global and regional art histories), narratives (meta and micro), values (tangible and intangible), memories (shared and private), and local aesthetics. And an artist's historical engagement with a material often marks a concern manifest in our current historical moment. Additionally, however, this extends Alfred Gell's arguments around the agency of self that makers transfer to materials through their creative human actions, and is critical the central idea in this thesis of how a woollen blanket is a 'technology of enchantment'.

Gell writes of how "art objects stand for persons and carry their intention or agency into an expanding social milieu" (Gell 1998). This social milieu I argue in this chapter is the global art world comprised of a network of localised art contexts. In Gell's larger thesis, he suggested that art objects, which he calls indexes, are at the nexus of social relations, and entangled with them is the agency of the artist (the primary agent), as well as the agency of art object (the secondary agent) that extends from this. In the context of the global art world and the woollen blanket, Gell's theories are valuable for seeing what can be learned about the intentionality of the artist in transmitting their the agency to materials through the self-conscious use and

transformation of woollen blankets. Gell also adds that "[in] [t]he West [there is] an activist notion of artistic creativity" (Gell, 30). This is something that becomes apparent in the case studies presented throughout this chapter. Therefore, in responding to Gell's framework around understanding human agency articulated through human creative action on our material world, we start to see how the movement of materials is both local and global. Again, this is where I am operationalising his theories around transformation and 'technologies of enchantment'. According to anthropologist James Leach these creative acts have "consequences for the way people are [subsequently] connected to the objects, and to one another"; this again reaffirms Arthur Danto's ideas about the meaning of materials used, which draws us back to Gell's ideas about how social relations coalesce around materials (Leech 2007: 23).

MAP 2. North America. 2014. Designed by Fiona P. McDonald



MAP 3. Aotearoa New Zealand. 2014. Designed by Fiona P. McDonald

At the outset of my fieldwork, locations such as art galleries—public and private, regional and national—acted as sites or indicators that transformed woollen blankets were involved within both global and regional art spaces. Several exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand drew my attention to current artworks that incorporated works that used transformed woollen blankets by

contemporary artists.[19] Therefore, the methodology that undergirds the presentation of data in this chapter is centreed on the logic of globally situating the transformation type of woollen blankets in order to allow the localised nuances to prevail.

As Nicholas Thomas notes, "[a]rt is curiously dispersed within public culture" and therefore this chapter spans all three field sites as way to looking specifically at examples by practicing contemporary artists (Thomas 1999: 187). Additionally, Thomas also argues that "[t]he anthropologist is not obliged to define the art object"; therefore, in the context of this discussion the simple fact that one or more woollen blankets appears in a work of art that has been exhibited within sites such as art galleries and been called art by the maker has qualified it for inclusion here (Thomas 1998: 7).

The Woollen Blanket in the Art World

The larger global and regional art historical frameworks that many artists work within, and against, are entangled in understanding how the materials are deployed as aesthetic mediums that reference the makers' histories, communities, knowledge, and

[19] My own awareness of woollen blankets in Aotearoa New Zealand was not even visible until 2006 when during my MA that looked at blankets in Canada I read an article by Leonard Bell. At the outset of my fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand, I visited Objectspace Gallery in Auckland (December 2010). During my conversation with Philip Clarke, Director of ObjectSpace, he shared with me information about the exhibition history of *Blanket Stitch* curated by artist Carole Shepheard. Prior to fieldwork I was unaware of Shepheard's work. Upon reading her catalogue, I was immediately taken aback by the serendipitous use of language we were both using in relation to contemporary artistic engagement with woollen blankets. In 2009, in advance of knowing about Shepheard's work I, too, referred to the blanket as "an unremarkable object" and yet she adds to her conversation on the blanket a narrative and implicates the blanket poetically as a mnemonic device as she shares her experience with her grandmother greeting her at the train with a woollen blanket after a long journey across Aotearoa New Zealand. The history that Shepheard identifies about blankets on whalers ships also foregrounds the early narratives associated with cross-cultural exchange that is often addressed in the political discourse around blankets.

contextualisation of local aesthetics. Within larger Western art historical discourses, the act of transforming objects of everyday life into art has been witnessed in at least two other iconic examples that paved the way for artists today. First, Marcel Duchamp, as the "father of the ready made", creatively made the movement of preexisting quotidian materials and objects in to art historically popular (Schneider 2007: 142). Shifting, as Myers would argue, the objects value into a new regime of value and power (Myers 2001).[20] As art historian Herbert Molderings writes, "The readymades [sic] invented by Duchamp, in which everyday objects are transformed into artworks, are [the] founding works of Dada and Surrealism. They have created, for what we call sculpture, absolutely new parameters" (Molderings 1997: 6). It is these new parameters that have invited further creative actions upon textile materials like woollen blankets as a means of responding to the specificity of ones' experience within their material world. And second, woollen materials such as felted textiles have a resonance with earlier works by Joseph Beuys. Michel De Certeau's work on the everyday draws attention to how human activity such as creative action traces back to Diderot's ideas around designating labels to types of art such as 'maneuver' in reference to the adaptation of materials by "cutting, shaping, joining, and so on, without giving them a 'new state' (by fusion, composition, etc) as the *manufacturing* arts do" (De Certeau 1984: 66). But as art historian Peter Chametzky traces out, Beuys' use of felt made from wool and hair relate to his own interest in the body's "continual change". He notes that felt is one of the oldest human fabrics, made not from weaving but from pressing together fibres that can derive from many different sources,

[20] Myers argues that "'[a]rt] has been situated in the West as a category of redemptive value, distinct from money and discrete from other sociocultural values" (Myers 2001: 7).

including rabbit fur. Its cultural universality, age, and ability to integrate diverse strands appealed to Beuys's transcendental ambitions" (Chametzky 2010: 189; Auther 2010; Thomspon 2011).[21,22] This was followed by work Robert Morris did in the late-1960s where he "cut slits in a sheet of felt, hung it from the wall at two fixed points, and let it flop in a tumbled skein to the floor" (Adamson 2007: 59-60).

Below in TABLE 1 are only a sample of some exhibitions (in chronological order) that bookend the start to end of this research project. Each exhibition contained one or more artwork with a woollen blanket. Together these exhibitions are critical to this study because collectively they speak to the global movement of woollen blankets into contemporary art, and the networks, as well as the social and economic relations that start to emerge. Noting these exhibitions here also serves as a sort of exhibitionary history of use to specific works that have opened up spaces to understand how the conscious selection of materials in art participates in translating the everyday realities of the makers and the potential for cognitive responses of those who experience their works.

[21] Beuys wrapped and rolled, folded and wore felted materials. Some works include: "The Pack", his own performance in 1965 that included the Fluxes song "The Chief", as well as his 1974 work "I like America and America Likes Me", as well as his 1966 "Infiltration homogen für Konzertflügel (Homogeneous Infiltration for Piano)".

[22] Curator Carole Shepheard talks about the use of felt by Beuys in her exhibition *Blanket Stitch* (2009) at ObjectSpace, Aoteaora New Zealand. However, I would like to acknowledge that Māori Curator Megan Tamati-Quennell at Te Papa Museum posted an image on Facebook of a work by Beuys she saw while in in Paris (2010). I am grateful the exchange of ideas with Megan about Beuy's work.

TABLE 1. Sample Survey of Exhibitions involving woollen blankets

YEAR	LOCATION	EXHIBITION TITLE
1997	Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada	***Blanket Stitch***
2004	ObjectSpace, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Blanket Stitch***
2008	ObjectSpace, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand	***No Rules: Rediscovering Embroidery***
2008	Whakatane District Gallery and Museum, Whakatane, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Whakarereketanga – Transitions***
2008	Tauranga Art Gallery, Tauranga, Aotearoa New Zealand	***ALTER-NATIVE: Mark Sykes***
2009	Tauranga Art Gallery, Tauranga, Aotearoa New Zealand	***7 x 10: Akiko Diegel***
2009	Tauranga Art Gallery, Tauranga, Aotearoa New Zealand	***My Ship | Tēnei Wakahēra: Tracey Williams***
2009	Lopdell House, Titirangi, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Post Stitch: an exhibition of contemporary New Zealand stitched works***
2009	Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, Porirua City, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Thrift: the art of making do***
2009-2010	City Gallery Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Roimata Toroa, by Ngaahina Hohaia***
2010	Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, Porirua City, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Nga Kakahu: Change and Exchange, Roka Ngarimu-Cameron and Jo Torr***
2010	Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand	***RE-FIBRA: Contemporary Textile Art - A Dialogue Between New Zealand and Sweden***
2011	City Gallery Wellington, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Mana Takatāpui: Taera Tāne***
2011	Plug in Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada	***Close Encounters: The Next 500 Years***
2012	Museum of Art and Design, New York City, United States	***Changing Hands 3: Art Without Reservation***
2012	Expressions—Mount Marua Gallery, Upper Hutt, Aotearoa New Zealand	***Common Thread***
2012	Peabody Essex Museum, MA, United States	***Shapeshifting*: *Transformations in Native American Art***
2012	Mass MOCA, Salem, USA	***Oh Canada***
2013	National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada	***Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art***

Since the mid-1980s, woollen blankets started to appear both literally and figuratively in works of art by several practicing artists in Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand. In the first half of this chapter, abbreviated examples are presented to capture the scope of how artists have *literally* and visually transformed one or more woollen blankets. The qualitative data from each visual and material case study (specifically how artists and curators speak about their engagement with woollen blankets) is central to the qualitative (and mnemonic) significance that has come to be associated with woollen blankets in the examples presented in the second half of this chapter (TABLE 2 and TABLE 3)

Moving beyond marginalising and damaging colonial representations of Indigenous Peoples wrapped in woollen blankets by mostly British colonial artists, contemporary Indigenous artists are embracing self-representations that incorporate the woollen blanket as way of decolonising it and themselves as subjugated peoples and the materials that participate in colonial projects. In 1983, Bill Powless (*Mohawk, Six Nations*) was, to my knowledge and research, one of the first artists to visually represent himself with a woollen blanket as the "Beach Blanket Brave" (FIGURE 6). Shortly thereafter, similar representations mostly by Indigenous artists started to convey personal experiences with not only the history of the blanket, but also with the corporal nature of the woollen blankets through visual representations and material transformations (see FIGURE 7 for a photographic example by Jolene Rickard (*Tuscarora*)).

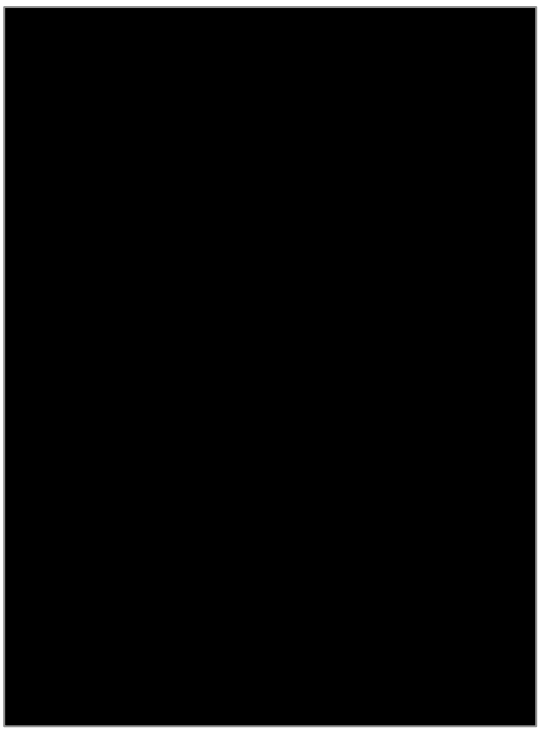


FIGURE 6. Bill Powless. *Beach Blanket Brave*. 1984.
Acrylic on canvas board, 51 x 41 cm.
From: Alan Ryan. 1999. *Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Canadian Art*. Vancouver: UBC Press: 17

FIGURE 7. Jolene Rickard. *I see red in '92*. 1992.
Ektacolour/silver prints, 60 x 90cm.
From: W. Jackson Rushing III, ed. 1999.
Native American Art in the Twentieth Century:Makers, Meaning, History: Colour Plate L

There exist many socially evocative examples where artists have visually transformed the woollen blanket to foreground their own identity in a political way by drawing attention to the history of woollen blankets in colonial projects (and contexts). The use of materials as tools to articulate political statements in art, however, is widely accepted and anticipated in the Western art world. Drawing upon similar references made by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (1991), as well as Sally Price (1989), Myers notes rightly, "[t]here is no longer a shock in the revelation that the value of an art object—or class of objects", in this case the woollen blankets, "is linked to other political and social values" (Myers 2011: 8). Similar paintings with self-representations by Indigenous artists continue today. Another central example is "Olympian" (1991) (FIGURE 8), a work by Jim Logan (*Métis*) that references French Impressionist Édouard Manet's iconic painting, "Olympia" (1863). In Logan's work, that extends from his series *Let us Compare Miracles*, the use of a multi-stripped woollen blanket is central to his political statements about calling out the injustices and hegemonic relationships that exist between non-Indigenous people and subjugated Indigenous Peoples in Canada. He articulates his position by presenting a gendered role reversal scenario where he paints himself as the nude resting upon the blanket atop the buffalo hide robe, and is attended to by a non-Indigenous male butler, within his private dwelling of a teepee. Rather than Manet's racially complicated work where nude European woman seductively lays facing the viewer from the confines of her bedchamber, and served in the background by a Black servant.

FIGURE 8. Jim Logan. ***Olympian.*** **1991.**
Acrylic on Canvas. 107 x 137 cm.
From: *Transitions: Contemporary Canadian Indian and Inuit Art*.
Traveling Exhibition Catalogue (1997): 39

Moving from the visual to the material, one of the first examples I have identified where an artist directly transformed a woollen blanket is a site-specific installation entitled, "Up Biblum God" (1987) (FIGURE 10) by Alan Michelson (*Mohawk, Six Nations*). When talking with Michelson about creating this work during an artist residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, he traced out for me how he transformed a new Hudson's Bay Company multi-coloured striped Point blanket into a site specific canvas by using an encaustic paint to render upon it a beaver pelt and trap. Here the woollen blanket gets transformed as a canvas installed in the gallery in relation to other material objects that are bespoke of colonial histories, trade interactions, and assimilation practices between settlers and Indigenous communities. Michelson also included in this installation the original box the woollen blanket was sold in during the 1980s. The title of this work referred to the Algonquin bible called

Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God; also know as the first Christian bible in the United States.

Shortly after this work, Michelson collaborated with the artist-led group REPOhistory in New York City to see the emergence of a work called *John Jacob Astor and Native Americans* (1992) (FIGURE 9) as part of their the REPOhistory: The Lower Manhattan Sign Project.[23] This specific work was temporarily installed (duration unknown) at the Pine Street location in Manhattan, NYC (USA). According to Michelson this was "the original headquarters of John Jacob Astor's fur-trading empire, and addressing his questionable trading practices with Native Americans" (Michelson

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[23] *REPOhistory: Lower Manhattan Sign Project* was an artist-led project to present an alternative view of history during the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus' arrival in North America. According to Lucy Lippard: "Amid the signage jungle of lower Manhattan, the metal plaques attached high on lampposts might first be taken as standard warnings from officialdom. But the imagery seems unlikely, a falling body, the photo of an open grave, portraits of a homeless man and a radical politician, a floating ladder and noose. And the texts just don't have that bureaucratic thud. On closer scrutiny of the information offered, mutiny is apparent. The lively array of pictorial signs is, of course, art. But rather than "review" the products (most of which work really well in context), I want to explore the process of this exemplary public art project. The goal was to repossess history. "Whose History is Remembered? Who Will We Forget?" is the fundamental question asked by REPOhistory, a multiethnic collective of artists, writers[,] and educators whose Sign Project opened with panache and a parade in lower Manhattan in June 1992. The two-sided. 18 x 24, three-color photo silkscreen historical markers, 39 of them in all[,] are clustered between Canal Street and the Battery, mostly south of City Hall Park. Although their projected life span is one year (through June 1993), some may last longer. It's kind of a miracle that they are there at all. The project was conceived by alumni of PAD/D (Political Art Documentation/Distribution), the activist art group (and Archive[…] now at the Museum of Modern Art) that almost survived the 1980's, and other experienced activist artists. First called The History Project, it began as a study groyp [sic] and developed by the fall of 1989 into a proposal (offered by REPOhistorian Greg Sholette) to "retrieve and relocate absent historical narratives at specific locations in the New York City area through counter-monuments, actions and events." Because many of the members were working already to counteract the official Columbus Quincentennial events, it was suggested at early meetings that the theme of colonialism/racism be adopted and the signs be scattered throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn, so that people could deal with their own neighborhoods and local education. One ambitious idea was to map the entire city and catalogue the historical sites in order to determine an overriding theme. Finally the group decided to focus for the time being on the lost history of lower Manhattan, where it all began, and where most events could be categorized as colonialism and racism" (*Critical Tools for Critical Times* website, available at http://ct4ct.com/REPOhistory#Lower_Manhattan_Sign_Project, last accessed 2 March 2014).

2013). In this instance, Michelson used the template of the multi-coloured stripe Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket to make a political statement around the history of trade with Native Americans in Manhattan.

FIGURE 9. Alan Michelson. *John Jacob Astor and Native Americans*. 1992.
Silkscreened aluminum. 18 × 24 inches. Image courtesy the artist

FIGURE 10. Alan Michelson. *Up Biblem God.* 1987.
Mixed media. Installation dimensions: 12 x 30 x 14 feet. Image Courtesy the artist

TABLE 2. Summary of Artists Working in North America with Woollen Blankets

ARTIST NAME	COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE
1. Alan Michelson	USA (Registered First Nation in Canada)
2. Bill Powless	USA (Registered First Nation in Canada)
3. Bob Boyer	Canada
4. Bonnie Divine	Canada
5. David Dixon	Canada
6. Irene Klar	Canada
7. Jane Ash Poitras	Canada
8. Jim Logan	Canada
9. Jolene Rickard	USA
10. Keesic Douglas	Canada
11. Keith Harder	Canada
12. Kent Monkman	Canada
13. Leah Decter (with curator Jaimie Isaac)	Canada
14. Liz Magor	Canada
15. Marie Watt	USA
16. Marianne Coreless	Canada
17. Michelle Lavellee	Canada
18. Noelle Hamlyn Snell	Canada
19. Rebecca Belmore	Canada
20. Robert Houle	Canada
21. Ron Noganosh	Canada
22. Sandra Alfoldy	Canada
23. Sonny Assu	Canada
24. Teresa Burrows	Canada

Also in the United States, Robert (Bob) Boyer (1948-2004) (*Métis Cree*) created a series of works entitled *Blanket Statements* started in 1985 (sample work captured in FIGURE 13) where his works functioned as acts of resistance toward dishounoured treaty agreements. Bob Boyer's *Blanket Statement* series convey many meanings associated with the woollen blanket. Interestingly, Boyer first worked on cotton

blankets, but was referencing the woollen blankets distributed by traders, government officials, and also at Indigenous ceremonies across North America. Wendy Winter wrote, "Boyer's paintings on *Blankets*, and their provocative titles, often contrasted the historical and cultural symbolism of a blanket (security, warmth, generosity) with difficult issues related to the colonization of North America" (Winter 2009: 16). In 1988, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) exhibited Boyer's works in a solo show entitled, *Bob Boyer: A Blanket Statement*. Through his works, Boyer conveyed his personal statements about colonial history, residential schooling in Canada, and other emotive issues by using blankets as both his canvas and his subject matter. Most notably is his first blanket painting where he uses the cotton blanket as his canvas with oil paints to create "Smallpox Issue" (1983) (FIGURE 13).[24] However, "Smallpox Issue", again according to Winter, "address the deliberate and horrific impregnation of the smallpox virus into government-issued blankets distributed to Aboriginal populations during the nineteenth century" (Winter 2009: 15).

The historical reference to smallpox recurs in the works of many artists working with woollen blankets and I allow their work, and those who have written about their work, to stand as the primary presentation of the cultural dialogue around smallpox in this dissertation in order to remain consistent with my ambition to show how histories of colonialism are reconciled and contested through woollen blankets. As the topic of smallpox is hugely complex across all three field sites, it is indicative, again, as

[24] In a discussion of this work, Carmen Robertson states, "The blanket itself; you know something…it's warm and comforting but also references a time in Canadian history of the spread of this horrid disease of Small Pox that went through communities throughout Canada and the United States and actually throughout the Americas" (*A Pivotal Painting.* VirtualMuseum.ca [accessed 24 April 2010]. http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/BobBoyer/en/interviews-robertson2.html).

some*thing* that ties the woollen blanket into to a shared colonial experience that is being reconciled and concisely addressed through its aesthetic transformation. To clarify, this means that Indigenous artists are actively using the woollen blanket not as a technology of germ warfare, but as a way of reconciling the history of use and the role of woollen blankets in colonial situations.

Curator Karen Duffek adds to a broader understanding of Boyer's work by commenting that his work is:

> [O]ne of the most provocative in its juxtaposition of aesthetics and historical/political references. Initially, the visually appealing, brightly dotted design appears to complement the blanket's inherent qualities of warmth and comfort. But the title adds another dimension of meaning to the multi–colored circles: it refers to the historic issuing of smallpox-infected blankets to Indians.[25]

The emotionally complex relationship and culturally-specific, as well as divided, narratives between smallpox and woollen blankets has been touched upon since Boyer is also found in works by Robert Houle (*Saulteaux First Nations*), Rebecca Belmore (*Anishinaabe*), and Marianne Coreless (FIGURE 11),[26] as well as other artists discussed later in this chapter such as Sonny Assu (*Lig̱wilda'x̱w (Kwakwaka'wakw) of the We Wai Kai First Nation* (*Cape Mudge*)) (FIGURES 21-24), Suzanne Tamaki (*Maniapoto, Tuhoe, Te Arawa*), and Leah Decter (FIGURE 20) to name just a few. Each artist takes up the history of woollen blankets as a tool used in germ warfare against Indigenous peoples

[25] Karen Duffek's argument and inference about smallpox is her own. To date I have not read any document that issued such an order, and therefore acknowledge that my future research will look specifically at this historical issue. It is a widely articulated doxa about smallpox and data on its history is complex and political.

[26] Specifically, Houles work "Palisade" (1999). Additionally, at the *2013 Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* exhibition, there was a town hall event held at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa with all of the exhibiting artists who were present for the Opening events. During this event Robert Houle, in response to a question by curator Greg Hill about process in their work said that "materiality is my material and so is history. Because with history comes emotion". Houle continued to talk about smallpox medicine and how he "tries to decolonize" himself that transpired as a specific conversation of healing with his family.

in most settler states. This historical reference to smallpox relates to the agency artists exert upon particular materials in the creative production of art—here artists are able to incorporate their own biographical agency that in turn 'abducts' and allows the material to enchant the viewer in the exhibition of their political statements central to their works.

Addressing germ warfare with woollen blankets is heavily trafficked in contemporary art by artists who chose to use the woollen blanket as the medium for conveying often political messages that are central to their own reconciliation with history and with historical injustices to both themselves and their families.[27] The meta-narrative around smallpox and woollen blankets has been addressed as satire in the media by comedians such as Stephen Colbert in conversation with Native American author and poet Sherman Alexie (*Spokane*) on the Comedy Central's *The Colbert Report* (2008) when promoting his work, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007).[28] In this instance, Colbert's political satire is used to prompt Alexie into a discussion of smallpox when he states, "we would like our blankets back […] but can you have them dry cleaned first."

[27] Reconciliation is a concept that now has a lot of emotions and political economy within Indigenous communities in former and current settler colonial states. Rightly, Métis artist and curator David Garneau argues in relation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada that there is more of primary need for conciliation before any act of reconciliation can be approached, established, or achieved (Garneau 2013).

[28] The banter between Colbert and Alexie around woollen blankets, in summary began when Colbert said to Alexie, "We, Anglos, forgive you [pointing at Alexie] for attacking the Wagon Trains. All is forgiven" As the audience erupts with laughter, Alexie responds with "And we forgive you for smallpox." A pause from Colbert before he responds with, "We'd like our blankets back […] have them dry-cleaned please." Colbert Nation, *Comedy Central* website available at, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/189691/october-28-2008/sherman-alexie, last accessed 15 March 2009).

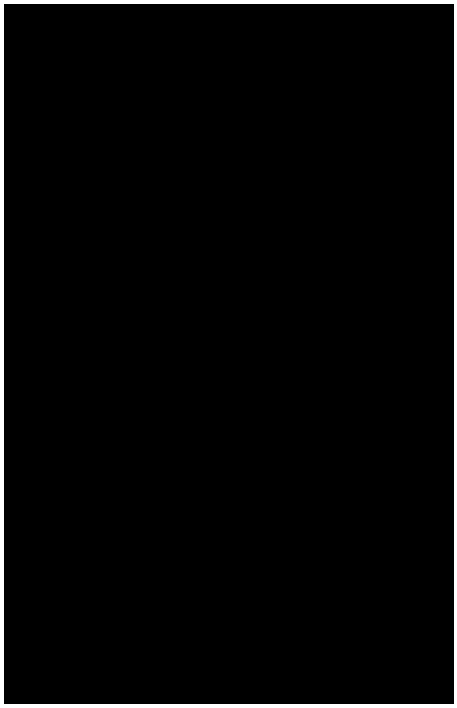

FIGURE 11. Marianne Coreless. *Blanket IV*. 2002.
Wool, beaver fur, human hair, needles, thread, acrylic paint. 72 x 38 inches.
From: Marianne Coreless Home Page, available at www.mariannecoreless.com, last accessed 8 January 2009

The specific use of blankets in what is called germ warfare in the United States in particular is traced back to documentation and statements made by General Amherst around 1763. Extensive research by Nancy Mayor has been done to understand this history in North America and I would be doing a disservice to hers and other historical and comprehensive studies to even attempt a summary here. For example, a notable artwork by Rebecca Belmore (*Anishinabe*) exhibited during the 2011 *Close Encounters: The Next 500 Years* exhibition at the Plug in Gallery in Winnipeg (Canada), was her video piece entitled, *The Blanket*. According to curator Lee-Anne Martin who worked on this exhibition: "For more than two decades, the blanket has been a keystone in the work of Rebecca Belmore. It is an object loaded with heavy significance for First Nations peoples—from the sinister history of the smallpox pandemic that devastated Aboriginal communities in the 18th century to the institutional corruption that has left

many modern individuals literally and socially 'out in the cold' often with tragic consequences" (Canadian Art 2012). As referenced in the Introduction concerning the *Colonialism Ain't Fashionable* (FIGURE 12 and APPENDIX 2) online project, Belmore's sentiments on this project are used to cite connections between diseases and woollen blankets for Indigenous Peoples.

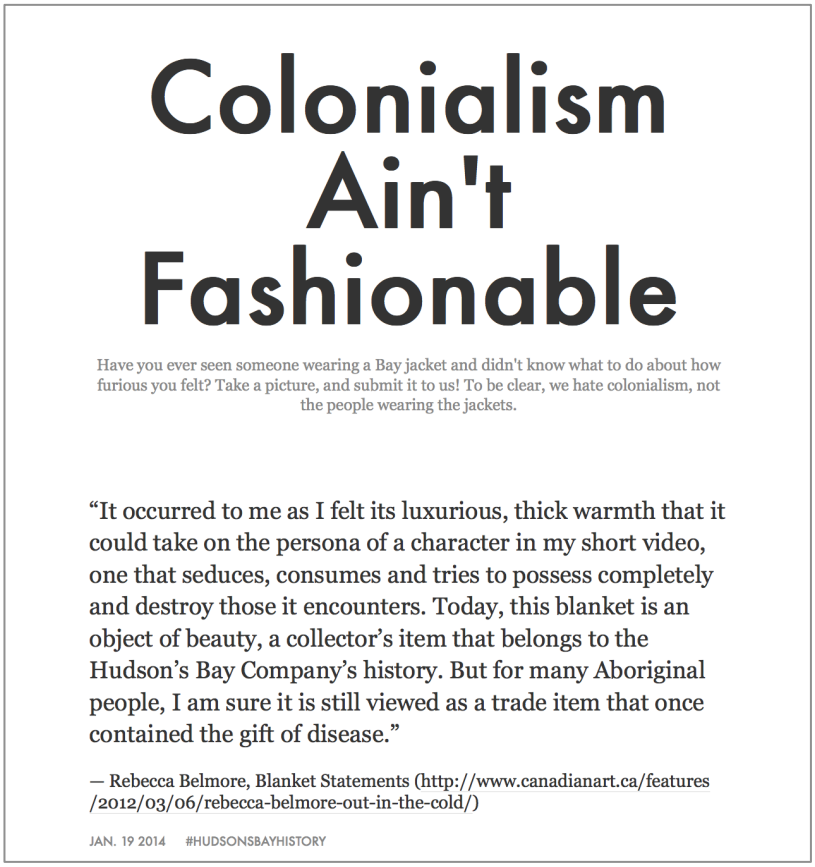

FIGURE 12. *Colonialsim Ain't Fashionable*. 19 January 2014.
Screenshot of: http://colonialismaintfashionable.tumblr.com/

Around this same time when smallpox started to appear as a topic addressed predominantly by Indigenous artists, a similarly important issue culminated around using woollen blankets to artistically talk about historical treaties and contemporary injustices. In 1991, Ron Noganosh (*Anishinaabe of the Magnetawan* First Nation), like Michelson (*Mohawk, Six Nations*) also reconfigured the multi-coloured striped blanket into a traditional Native American drum with a title, "That's All it Costs" (FIGURE 14)—

a title that invites a reading to the role of blankets in trade and treaty agreements.[29] The giving of woollen blankets for land in treaty agreements with the British Crown was common practice in many settler states. In all three field sites in this chapter, the trade of woollen blankets for land is a well-known fact. Marie Watt's (*Seneca*) comprehensive body of work since 2003 (discussed in depth later in this chapter as one of the primary case studies) also touches upon treaties, as her work represents one of the largest series of sculptural works made from woollen blankets to date that are folded and stacked into either totem-like structures within the gallery, or take the form of large-scale wall-piece installations that speak to histories of tapestry and wall hangings (FIGURES 26-27).

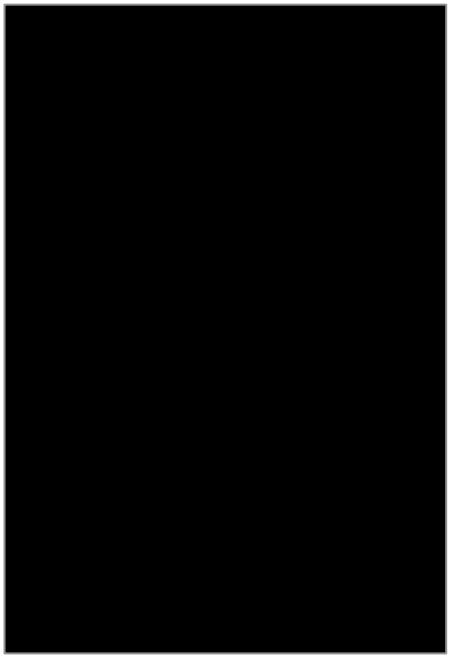

FIGURE 13. Bob Boyer. *A Smallpox Issue*. 1983.
Oil with rawhide on blanket. 190 x 122 cm.
From: Virtual Museum of Canada, available at http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/bob_boyer/en/artwork015.html, last accessed 2 February 2010

[29] As will be explored later in this chapter in terms of the economic-value of blankets, the giving and gifting of woollen blankets for land in treaty agreements with the British Crown was common practice in many settler states such as Canada, the US, and Aotearoa New Zealand.

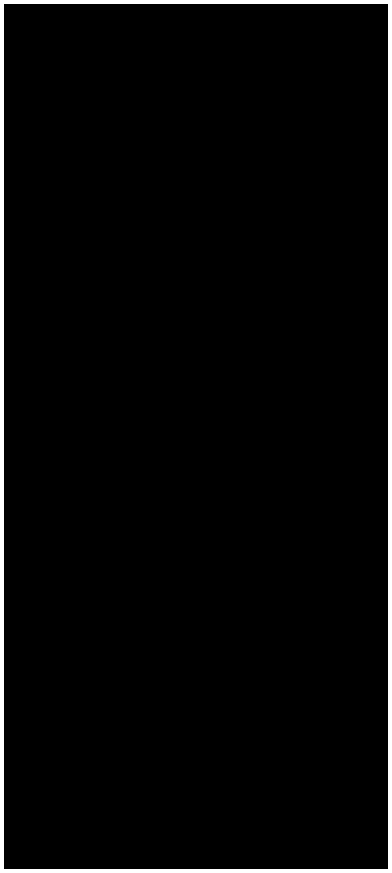

FIGURE 14. Ron Noganosh. *That's All It Costs*. 1991.
Blanket, cloth, plastic, stuffed bear, flag. 102 x 64 cm
From: Alan Ryan. 1999. *Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Canadian Art*. Vancouver: UBC Press: 15

In Canada, the examples are equally as extant and include works by Kent Monkman (*Cree*), Rebecca Belmore (*Anishinaabe*), and Teresa Burrows, and others (see TABLE 1). As is discussed in the second part of this chapter are works by Sonny Assu, Liz Magor, and Leah Decter.

Other notable works that transform the woollen blanket through the act of stitching are by two respective artists that work that are based in Winnipeg, Canada. First, is Teresa Burrows whose work "Rupert land Regalia: The (Sul)fur Queen" (2005-2007) (FIGURE 15) was exhibited at the Museum of Vancouver as part of an exhibition entitled *The Art of Craft* on display during the 2010 Winter Olympic held in Vancouver,

Canada.[30] Using materials similar to those found in Michelson's 1980s piece and Noganosh's 1990s work, she, too, references the fur trade. The wall text that summarised this work is as follows:

> The *(sul)fur queen* is a mixed media Mother Nature, in all her adornments. A trade blanket skirt overlaid by a blanket robe is adorned with beaver fur, skulls and large beaded flowers/letters spelling out "pro pelle cutem" the Hudson 's Bay Company motto, "we risk our lives for pelts". Canada's wilderness provided a profitable fur trade that unified the French, English and First Nations and subsequently founded our nation (Museum of Vancouver, 2010).

FIGURE 15. Teresa Burrows. Rupertsland Regalia the (Sul)fur Queen.
Mixed-media, beadwork. 170 cm x 91 cm x 91 cm.
Imaged courtesy the Museum of Vancouver

[30] One other work exhibited adjacent to Burrow's work also referencing the Hudson's Bay blankets in this exhibition was "Sanctuary" created by Noelle Hamlyn Snell (hand woven triple cloth, hand spun wool, hand dyed gampi. 130 cm x 340 cm x 290 cm). The wall text summarised this work as follows: "*Sanctuary* is a hand woven and hand spun exploration of personal and cultural identity that uses the iconic form of the Hudson 's Bay Blanket. At first blush, the weaving appears to be unified, and the Canadian identity appears to be clear. But the woven surface is vast, not the normal proportions or the typical felted weave of an actual Hudson 's Bay Blanket. Canada is not that simple" (Museum of Vancouver 2010).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the incorporation of woollen blankets produced both in the UK, but more specifically the woollen blankets produced in Aotearoa New Zealand (see Chapter Two for an comprehensive history of woollen mills in Aotearoa New Zealand), is equally as distinct in contemporary art. The number of artists exerting artistic agency upon blankets is vast, particularly in the last decade.

TABLE 3. Summary of Artists Working in Aotearoa New Zealand with Woollen Blankets

ARTIST NAME
1. Aimee Ratana
2. Akiko Diegel
3. Andrea Chandler
4. Ani O'Neill
5. Alexis Neal
6. Chelsea Gough
7. David K. Shields (with the design label: *Native Agent*)
8. Deborah Walsh
9. Hayley Lowe
10. Jo Keith
11. Jo Torr
12. Katherine Morrison
13. Karen Burns
14. Laura Marsh
15. Leanne Joy Lupelele Clayton
16. Leslie Falls
17. Marion Manson
18. Mark Sykes
19. Meliors Simms
20. Ngaahania Hohaia
21. Paula Coulthard
22. Peter Robinson
23. Rona Ngahuia Osborne (and her design label: *Native Agent*)
24. Rosemary McLeod
25. Susan Jowsey
26. Suzanne Tamaki
27. Taera Tāne
28. Tracey Williams
29. Victoria McIntosh

One of the first artworks in Aotearoa New Zealand to incorporate woollen blankets was a three-piece costume/sculptural work with sound component in 1991 by fibre, textile, and costuming artist Suzanne Tamaki (*Maniapoto, Tuhoe, Te Arawa*). [31] In carrying out early archival research for projects that Tamaki undertakes with her collective known as *Native Sista*, she took note of how woollen blankets had started to replace Māori cloaks in the visual archive. She set out in her first works (while an art student) to "recreate them [cloaks] in a contemporary scene" and to make visible "the stories behind the blankets of how they came to be assimilated into Māori culture when they took over from the cloaks because they were a lot cheaper and easier to get a hold of. And anybody could have a blanket". In describing her first three-piece

[31] In 2007, Tamaki was commissioned by the British Museum to create a new work that responded to a Māori kite in their collection. As a collector of blankets and bird feathers, she created *Mana Whahine* (Bird Woman), the female companion to the male kite figure in their collection. Using feathers, wool blankets, and knitting needles, this is one of the many works of art Tamaki has created from woollen blankets. According to the British Museum record: "Kite made of wood, feathers (toroa (albatross), pigeon, tarapunga (red-billed gull), house sparrow, guinea fowl, pari/putangitangi (paradise shelduck), kereru (New Zealand pigeon), wild turkey, dominican [sic] seagull, kahu (Australian harrier), blackbird, Australian magpie), pukeko's (swamp hen) foot, kiriau (lace bark), tapa (barkcloth) [sic], paua (haliotis) shell, fibre, flax, seeds, plastic, wool, and copper wire. *Head:* Face of kite made of bark and edged with plaited natural fibre; facial moko (tattoo) on lips and chin in ink; eyes of paua shell attached with green kiriau. Green needle extends vertically downwards from chin. Headdress of feathers, secured with headband of woven black fibre cord decorated with white beads, and arranged over 'hair'. Hair plaited on one side and decorated with small circular disc. 'Topknot' decorated with circular disc and three needles. Seed earrings and feather ear attachments secured with copper wire. *Body of kite:* Triangular form, constructed with wooden rods, painted red and bound with black (vertical rods) and white woollen yarn (horizontal rods). Kite's body made of pink wool blanket. Two sets of cream needles (17; 4) arranged horizontally across the upper body of the kite. Red needle extends vertically upwards from the centre of the base rod, with needles of the same colour fanning outwards either side, interspersed with three feather quills and secured with copper wire. At the termination of the left vertical rod, corn husks (dyed black and doubled over), feather quills, and a bird's foot (pukeko) are secured with cream kiriau. On the right, feather quills are bound with flax fibre rings; feather and fibre attachments decorate rings. *Wings:* Feathers are laid in horizontal rows, grouped by type, and fanning out at either end of each wing. Feathers attached to backing of tapa (barkcloth)[sic], decorated on the reverse. Wings edged with white buttons sewn with red cotton thread" (British Museum 2008.2023.1).

costume work, “Bicultural Wrap”, acquired by The Museum of New Zealand | *Te Papa Tongarewa*, Tamaki noted to me her own understanding that “blankets contained disease like smallpox and the flu and contributed to wiping out like 80% of the Māori population”. “Bicultural Wrap” also included a commission by The Museum of New Zealand | *Te Papa Tongarewa* where they wished to have Tamaki talk about the research that went into her work. In response, she created an original studio-recorded “wrap/rap”–making reference to the “wrapping nature of blankets being wrapped around oneself”—performance and song that included the archival images. The wrapping and folding nature of the woollen blankets in this sense is one of the key imaginative responses to woollen blankets that ties in with larger anthropological interests in wrapping and folding that are addressed in Chapter Four (Gell 1993; Hendry 2005).

Tamaki noted that through her work with woollen blankets that “colonialism is a key message” that she wishes to convey to make visible how “the colonists and the materials they brought affected our...ummm…traditional costuming, and how we took on-board their things. And started wearing blankets, wearing hats, using buttons, we started sewing, and we even started knitting.” For Tamaki in all of her works with woollen blankets in her larger oeuvre she mobilises the material “to make a statement and to make people think and to discuss and to talk […] it was [always] just a political statement” to use the woollen blanket.

Around this same time in Aotearoa New Zealand, multimedia artist Sue Jowsey created “Untitled” (FIGURE 16) for her Master of Fine Arts graduate project that consisted of dyed woollen blankets with the words “faith” and “hope”, and the symbol of a cross embroidered on it. Awarded the prestigious 1995 Visa Gold Art Award in

Aotearoa New Zealand, this worked caused a notable amount of controversy because of the materials Jowsey used. Woollen blankets, the public thought, were not considered worthy for art. Since then, woollen blankets reappear in many of Jowsey's more recent collaborative photographic works with her husband, artist and curator Marcus Williams, where they take up a more creative documentary project whereby they incorporate woollen blankets and materials as part of this imaginative scape (Williams and Jowsey 2007).

FIGURE 16. Sue Jowsey. *Untitled. 1995.*
14 pieces of stained blanket embroidered with crosses and in some instances the words *faith* & *hope*. Image courtesy the artist

Around half a decade later, in 2000, curator Ruben Friend at the City Gallery in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand presented the work of several Māori artists in a show entitled, *The Pain of Parihaka*. By this time the larger response by the public to the use of woollen blankets in art had been somewhat more subdued in Aotearoa New Zealand. A central work in this show was "Roimata Toroa" (Tears of the Albatross)

(FIGURE 17) by Ngaahina Hohaia (*Parihaka, Ngāti Moeahu, Ngāti Haupoto, Taranaki iwi* (tribe)) made from three hundred and ninety-two poi that were hand-embroidered with albatross feathers—a symbol of the Parihaka movement that captures a "passive resistance against invasion by Government troops in 1881" on Māori land (Exhibition Text 2000).

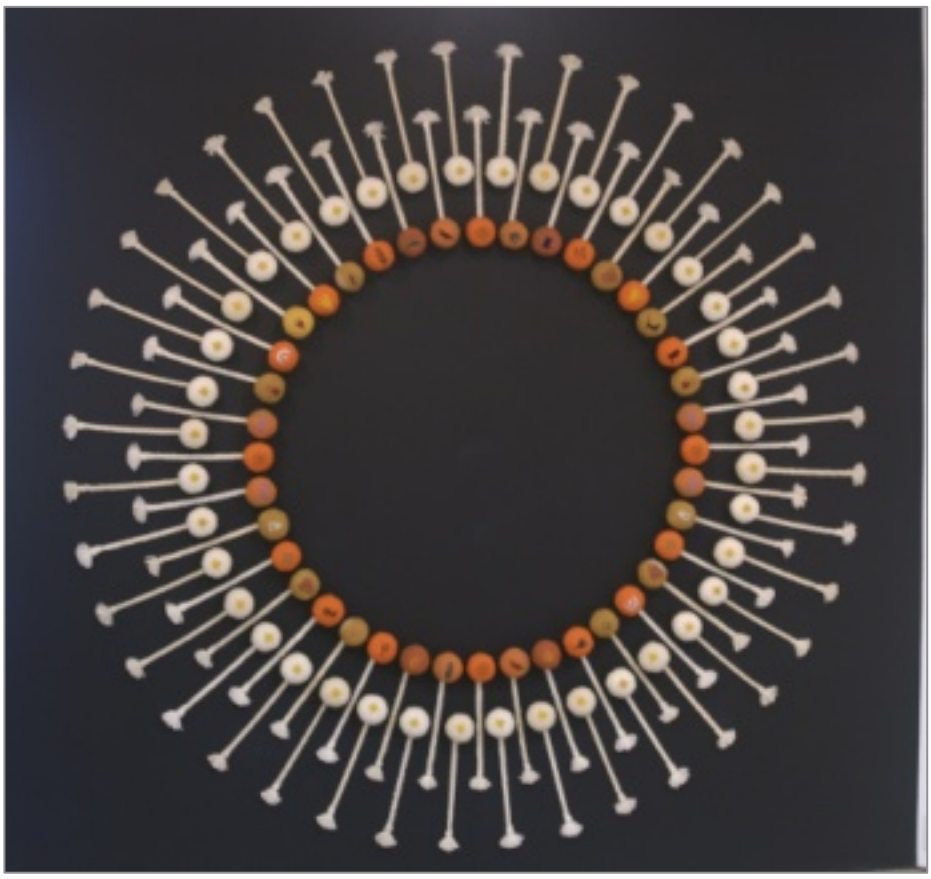

FIGURE 17. Ngaahina Hohaia. *Roimata Toroa.* 2000.
New Zealand wool blankets and poi. Image courtesy City Gallery Wellington

The poi are made from "100% New Zealand wool blankets symbolising the trade between Maori and Pakaha."[32] Poi are traditional Māori *taonga* (treasured thing) that

[32] I was made aware of these two explanations during my time in a *wananga* (learning workshops) at the University of Auckland (Māori Studies 2006-2007). During my time at a *wananga*, each person was to use this as an opportunity to work intensely on his or her individual material projects. Each attendee was investigating various pre-European modes of production for Māori *taonga*. One of my peers who performed with the poi regularly at her

are made of two parts—a ball that is attached to a woven cord. Traditional *poi* are woven with flax and are used in performances more often by women. Some suggest that the *poi* were employed to maintain agility of the wrist and hands of weavers; alternatively, others suggest that the rhythmic movement during performances is a representation of the flight of birds. Additionally, Hohaia's use of wool blankets makes reference to them as "products of the New Zealand economy built on Māori land". This work, like Suzanne Tamaki's works, moves to enchant and activate the woollen blanket as a material centrally entangled in colonial history and the cross-pollination of cultural heritages and knowledges into new forms (Kuechler 2009: 86).[33]

Also working through an engagement with colonial history and its material byproducts produced in Aotearoa New Zealand is artist Mark Sykes (*Ngati Rangitihi, Ngati Porou*) (FIGURE 18). In 2008, his works appeared in two exhibitions that incorporated woollen blankets into costuming. One exhibition, *ALTER-NATIVE: Mark Sykes* at the Tauranga Art Gallery; another art installation *Whakarereketanga – Transitions* at the Whakatane District Gallery and Museum. Sykes larger oeuvre considers the implications of blankets on Māori material culture and his current lived reality. Sykes draws upon historical research published by Michael King (1983) and Keith Sinclair (1988) to confirm historical projections that woollen blankets replaced Māori *kōrowai* (cloaks with *taaniko* bands) in ceremonial situations. What is interesting

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marae (meeting house) studied this technical process of poi construction and shared a performance with us at the end. During my various *wananga* I explored and created bone carvings of Māori *aurei* (cloak pins), as well as *turuturu* (weaving pegs), and a *toki* (an adze with a wooden handle, flax lashings, and *pounamu* (greenstone) blade) based on material objects found at the Auckland Museum. These projects were focused the materiality and process of production, rather than on replication as to replicate or copy in Māori tradition is considered *tapu* (forbidden).

[33] I am using here the term "renew" or "renewal" as presented by Kuechler and Eimke in *Tivaivai: The Social Fabric of the Cook Islands* (Kuechler and Eimke 2009: 89).

about Sykes's work is that while he considers the historical introduction of woollen blankets, his work uses woollen blankets that were produced in the mills that started to appear in Aotearoa New Zealand around the turn of the nineteenth century (again, see Chapter Two for the history of these mills).

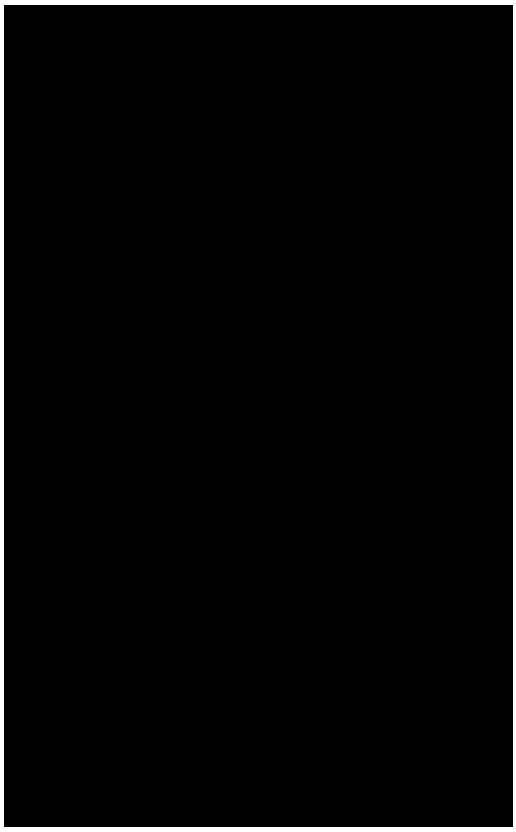

FIGURE 18. Mark Sykes. *Whakarereketanga – Transitions*. 2008.
Installation at the Whakatane District Gallery and Museum

In 2009, at the start of this material ethnography, I met Tracey Williams who created the site-specific installation entitled, "My Ship | Tēnei Wakahēra" (FIGURE 29) where she clad a handcrafted model ship with woollen blankets produced at mills in Aotearoa New Zealand. This same year, textile designer and sculptor Jo Torr created a series of Victorian gown sculptures made from woollen blankets (FIGURE 28). Rona Ngahuia Osborne, whose has worked with woollen blankets since the late-1990s

collaborated with Alexis Neal for a site-specific installation entitled, “Whare Taonga” (2012) at the Sargent Gallery in Whanganui (NZ) (2013).

The transformation of woollen blankets into contemporary art has been consistently on the rise since the mid-1980s as the survey I just presented maps out the phenomenon of use. What each transformation signifies has already pointed to the articulation of shared colonial experiences across all field sites, as well as the use of woollen blankets as surfaces upon which artists have used to “interchange” its function to serve their needs of articulating their mostly historical and political messages, especially when transformed by Indigenous artists in all field sites. As Wittgenstein argued, “things only take on their meaning through how they are used, which is often a function of where they are placed—physically, historically, and discursively” (Chametzky 2010: 1999).

Whose Memory? What histories? And Material-Reflexivity

The remainder of this chapter turns to present seven in depth case studies with contemporary artists interviewed, observed, and documented at length during fieldwork. Each case study features one or more works by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists working in North America and Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes three examples from Canada, followed by one example from the United States, and concludes with three examples from Aotearoa New Zealand. They are selected for discussion here because of the breath of variation observed in *what they,* the artists, *do* to woollen blankets in their practice over time. Each artist and their work, however, are discussed independently of each other so that their individual cultural references set up the opportunity as the chapter closes to reflect upon how their specific type of

creative human action articulates their interpretation of history, memory, and cultural heritage within the global network of art today (Fisher 1994; Rickard 2013).

CASE STUDY: *LIZ MAGOR (Canada)*

In 2011, Vancouver-based sculptor, Liz Magor, well-regarded for her work in casting forms and objects from everyday life, exhibited a new body of work made from and with woollen blankets that she purchased mostly from second-hand stores for her self-titled show in Toronto, Ontario (Canada) at Susan Hobbs Gallery (FIGURE 19, also see APPENDIX 8 for the gallery guide of all works in this exhibition).[34] According to one review of this exhibition, they note:

> Magor, a master at re-contextualising the banal, has gently intervened, inserting her presence on each blanket and thus marking them as unique objects. Holes have been covered or ringed with gobs of gypsum; stains have been re-stained, coloured over with fabric dyes; loose tags have been put back on, but backwards, or re-applied with diaper pins and tears have been repaired with scribbles of coloured thread" (Vaughn 2011).[35]

Installed as though the works were returned from the drycleaners, Magor's series can be read as either as an artistic intervention or as an act of valuation and conservation. Magor's profound interest in the woollen blanket label is also evident in this installation through the blankets she chose to work with. The woollen blankets in

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[34] Susan Hobbs gallery that commercially represents Liz Magor notes on the gallery website and quote Magor as saying: "Magor's practice utilises sculpture and photography to explore notions of memory, history, shelter, and survival. Exploring both natural and domestic themes, her sculptural works are forms of refuge that also confound the boundary between the real and the imagined. 'I am always looking for comfort in a world disturbingly subject to change. Sometimes I find it in work, as a recording of my activity. Sometimes I find it in objects, things that sit still for awhile [sic] and slowly gather, then release, their history. I wanted to do work that would objectify some history of a life, or at least the life of a body and the process of change that affects that body.' Liz Magor" (Susan Hobbs website, available at http://www.susanhobbs.com/artist/30059248-liz-magor, last accessed 12 December 2013).

[35] It is noted that all exhibition reviews referred to Magor's work as "transforming" mundane objects, blankets, textiles, materials, etc.

Magor's work mostly originate from mills in England, Canada, Australia, and China. Her creative action upon them in this exhibition deviates on many levels from what I have observed to be quite often political actions and statements by Indigenous artists; however, her actions remains consistent in articulating and reflecting her regional and local experience and memories with woollen blankets.

Throughout our time together, Magor shared with me the variety of labels often noting their value to her and that she felt they were important "because of the credentials that they represented. That they are sending. You know. And, uh, it's not just Canadian [...] There are Japanese and some are Chinese. I love the ones that are Chinese." Magor's approach to materials and their properties—physical and qualitative—are deeply processual in her practice and reflect her self-conscious actions on many ready-made materials that extend from her expansive interest in memory, survival, and heritage. Magor clarified that for her:

> I'm interested in the artefact. So…it…so then suddenly I look at the blanket as something that has been, you know, interrupted and delivered up to this big archive, which is Value Village [soft laughter]. And I am the curator going in to interpret in a way. So I'm not looking from a concept, I'm working from a process […]. I mean it is active. […] I'm in process and the process is intellectual, it's technical, it's historic. So … and … and… and I try to let the process follow the material intelligence of this" [as she picks up a blanket that is pink on one side and blue on the other].

Tracing out her actions as a metaphor, Magor's aesthetic actions start to become embodied as the actor, for example, allowing her to create as the artist/actor both sculptural forms and paintings, where she employs pre-used blankets including those with holes in the blanket repaired with polymerised, silver gypsum, and where blanket edging and labels are either re-stitched on or replaced entirely.

FIGURE 19. Liz Magor. Installation view of *Liz Magor* at Susan Hobbs Gallery. 2001
Image taken in gallery with permission. Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

Standing in Magor's studio one day, I observed her interaction with and amongst her materials as she excavated several woollen blankets from black trash bags. These were woollen blankets she had recently purchased at a second-hand shop. Magor adds these blankets to stacks of blankets already scattered across her workspace table, as well as the ones left out for the dog to sleep on. Admittedly, Magor's generosity to speak with me came in the middle of a busy time when she was completing a rather large sculpture for a public art commission. Magor openly noted to me that central to her work was a level of intimacy and familiarity with the blankets. "I'm a little out of touch with what I've got here. A few months ago I knew every blanket here … ."

However, Magor did make it clear how her conscious action of folding and unfolding blankets allows her to transform the blankets over time and within distinct

contexts from being something she calls sculptural (when in a folded state) to more of a painting (when unfolded and installed on the wall). According to Louis Owen:

> It is noteworthy that many artists […] have long espoused the significance of process—both in fabrication and encounter—maintaining that content and meaning [of materials and form] emerge during use, as well as from the materials themselves and the traditional methods of fabrication that are rich in social and cultural history (Owen 2011: 90-91).

Adapting some of Baudrillard's words here, "things fold and unfold" but in this case, certainly not by themselves. Through Magor's folding actions she makes visible her own cultural references as a non-Indigenous artist who works to escavate the *things* that have been "concealed". Subsequently she makes *things* "appear only when needed" in relation to her own experiences (Baudrillard 1997: 15) and through her exhibitions. But mostly, she makes visible how process and material are bedfellows in her practice and central to accessing materials related to both memories and survival.

CASE STUDY: *LEAH DECTER [in collaboration with curator Jaimie Isaac] (Canada)*

Leah Decter, a Winnipeg-based, inter-media (textiles, performance, installation, video, and digital media) began a project in 2009 in response to a statement made in 2008 by the Prime Minster of Canada, Mr. Stephen Harper. In his 2008 speech, Harper offered a "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools" on behalf of the Government of Canada. An apology that was to make history for acknowledging the atrocities, abuses, and injustices carried out toward First Nations children in Canada who suffered, and continue to suffer, either directly or indirectly, in

and from the aftermath of the Government-led Residential School Program.[36] This statement was offered around the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, one of many programs in twenty-three different countries set up to make reparations for past wrongdoings by colonial governments toward Indigenous Peoples. Through offering an apology for this colonial program in Canada, Prime Minster Harper was acknowledging the unbalanced colonial practices and assimilation policies that exist in Canada—a program that has left enduring and irreparable scars on Indigenous communities and culture across every settler state. However, one year after issuing this apology statement, Prime Minster Harper then declared at the 2009 G20 Summit held in Pittsburgh (USA) that "we [meaning Canada] also have no history of Colonialism." This statement became the catalyst and centrepiece for multi-media artist Leah Decter's ongoing work entitled, "(official denial): trade value in progress" (FIGURE 20).[37] Decter started this work by monogramming Prime Minister Harper's statement onto the centre of a larger multi-coloured striped Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket. As this project is process-based it therefore requires a brief description to show how woollen blankets are transformed over time and become technologies of enchantment for Decter.

Launched in 2010 by Decter, "(official denial): trade value in progress" was set up as a "critical non-Indigenous engagement" through a collaboration with Indigenous curator, artist, and writer Jaimie Isaac (*Sagkeen First Nation*) (Decter 2012: 165). The collaboration began when Isaac held a position as the visual arts coordinator for the

[36] "The Indian Residential School legacy in Canada was a historically, mutually beneficial relationship between the government and churches to forge a racist policy of assimilation and ethnocide. The schools were in operation for over 150 years" (Isaac 2012: 171).
[37] This work is situated with Decter's larger series entitled, "Trade Value". http://www.leahdecter.com/Leahdecter/trade_value.html

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After Decter's initial inscription onto a woollen blanket, she noted her goal as the artist was not about "devising a material representation of my interpretation of Harper's remark, I was interested in contextualising it in such a way that a viewer/participant could be engaged in rendering *their* understanding of, and response, to the statement in relation to each other, and directly in the generation of a material object" (Decter 2012: 167). To do this, Decter began organising what she calls 'Sewing Actions', where "viewers/participants" of the work are invited to participate. This dimension of Decter's 'Sewing Actions' has resonance with Beuys' "social sculptures" (Thompson 2011: 87).

FIGURE 20. Leah Decter. *(official denial): trade value in progress*. 2009-present. Woollen blankets, thread. Image courtesy the artist

Those who participate in Sewing Actions are asked to document in a book, a central element to this piece, their personal responses to Harper's contradictory

statement. By writing a response into the book, it situates an archive of responses. As a participant in the Sewing Action, one is then asked to select a response, other than the one they wrote, from the book (the statements are both anonymous and otherwise) and to stitch their selected statement directly onto the woollen blanket. Decter notes, "[p]eople write their own response in the books; however, in choosing to sew a response onto the blanket one is making someone *else's* contribution visible. Several Sewing Actions have resulted in the composite nature of this work as it exists today."

Started with one woollen blanket, this public artwork has grown to include a composite of many multi-coloured striped Hudson's Bay Company Point blankets that when installed read like a tapestry or wall-hanging. It is important to note here that the woollen blankets with the multi-coloured stripes where historically manufactured by Early's of Witney (England), and are now commonly referred to as Hudson's Bay Company Point blankets in Canada. These woollen blankets have been consistently the most popular type of the Hudson's Bay Company retail stores. The coloured stripes have significance, too, as they are the colours of Queen Anne. In 1711, all weavers within the Witney (Oxfordshire) region were 'united in the Company of Blanket Weavers, a guild formed which set the standards and generally regulated the industry.' In a way, the establishment of this guild was to set up a quality-assurance control program used to maintain a consistently high standard of manufacture for all woollen blankets produced. Within a year of formation of the guild, a standardisation of woollen blankets was being practiced across the United Kingdom. In 1712, all blanket

weavers were incorporated under a Royal Charter instituted by the Queen of England (McDonald 2006: 32).[38]

Historically in Canada, woollen blankets were the key trade good issued by the Hudson's Bay Company.[39] The woollen blankets were used for gifts, trade, and exchange with First Nations traders across what is today called Canada. Extant literature has been presented on the trading agendas and policies of the Hudson's Bay Company, and many oral traditions exist that tell the darker side of the Company's history. Decter writes that not only in relation to this work but the larger series known as "Trade Value" (from which this work is a part of), that in her work, she "deploys the blanket and its contentious social history through transfiguration, recontextualisation, and relational activation to foreground historical inter/counter-narratives, contemporary conditions, and future possibilities" (Decter 2012: 165).[40] Decter's statement is buttressed by Isaac's reflection that "the blanket is a reflexive aesthetic that invites viewers to reflect and consider past and current colonialism, becoming a space for agency and reflection. The blanket acts as a space and site for inquiry and social critique, and it is interdependent of the artists, curator, host, and participants to progress" (Isaac 2012: 176). In this work, the artist and curator, as well as those who

[38] See also: "The Manufacturing Process of HBC Point Blankets," in *Moccasin Telegraph* (Spring 1963: 10-13). It is also important to note that a standard was set on the quality of blankets prior to the Hudson's Bay Company involvement with Witney weavers, and therefore it was not the HBC that established a base line quality but rather it was a standard that they had to work with. HBCA—Blanket Search File#4: "Point" Blankets, Summary of Blankets at Fort William.

[39] Such extensive visibility through various media has overshadowed the participation of numerous other trading companies intimately involved in the Canadian fur trade throughout the last three centuries. For example, the North West Company, with its home base in Montréal, competed with the Hudson's Bay Company for access through Hudson Bay until they officially merged in 1821.

[40] Interestingly, Nicholas Thomas posits that "the mutability of things [is evident] in recontextualization" (Thomas 1991: 28).

stitched the woollen blankets with sentiments, re-position its value as a tool for reconciliation with history—lived and remembered. They also foreground, as Tim Ingold would suggest, that a woollen blanket is a material whereby its "surfaces [act] as spaces of continual interchange" (Ingold 2013).

Decter who self-identifies as a non-Indigenous Canadian is candid in both her writing and during our conversations in articulating the importance that her work speak critically about her family history as settlers in Canada, as well as about the history of Indigenous-settler relations today. Decter has exhibited internationally (Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia), and according to Decter, her work "is rooted in the spaces where material conditions and lived experiences intersect with social and political issues." For Decter to select a *thing* that has such a history in Canada is very pertinent to Danto's comments cited earlier. It also relates to French critic, curator, and art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud's idea that "[w]hen an artist find[s] material in objects that are already in circulation on a cultural market, the work of art takes on a script-like value" (Bourriaud 2002: 9).

The collaboration between Decter, Isaac, and their multiple participants from several Sewing Actions add another layer of meaning and value that, according to Decter, allows the work to act as an "exchange and elicits dialogue about contemporary conditions of settler colonialism and process of decolonisation and reconciliation in Canada" (Decter website).[41] At the time I spoke with these two women in 2012, Isaac noted that "[t]he blanket has collected more than 200 responses and over 120 sewn responses onto the blanket, and we continue to make connections"

[41] This perspective by Decter also informs a reading of exchange-value that draws on foundational work by Myers.

(Isaac 2012: 175). The quantitative measurement of responses by Isaac when positioned against the qualitative information read on the composite of woollen blankets shifts the woollen blanket from a trade good (as the title of this work infers) to its newly valued role as a work of art positioned by the artist and curator to be an active and literal material archive of memories—a repository of many people's truth, a tool of recovery, and mode of reconciliation. In this case, the woollen blanket is used to create a space for social conversation and participation.

CASE STUDY: *SONNY ASSU (Canada)*

Sonny Assu (*Lig̲wilda'x̲w (Kwakwaka'wakw) of the We Wai Kai First Nation (Cape Mudge)*), a contemporary interdisciplinary artist based in Montréal, Canada, is well regarded for his use of prominent signs and symbols such as the Coca-Cola logo and Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket. In the incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket, referred to by many as a 'national icon' in Canada, Assu notes that his practice involves merging "Indigenous iconography with the aesthetics of popular culture to challenge the social and historical values placed upon both" (Assu 2012). Assu consciously engages with materials that, for him, have histories and could subsequently be called 'storied objects'. In selecting to incorporate either woollen blankets (or representations of woollen blankets) associated with the historic Hudson's Bay Trading Company into his work, Assu participates as an active agent in moving not only the woollen blanket as material, but also in moving its histories and histories of use into the gallery or exhibition space.

One of the histories Assu foregrounds in his work concerns the role of woollen blankets in the historically significant Canadian fur trade industry. Historians and

anthropologists have acknowledged that woollen blankets were considered valuable commodities sent out as trade goods with colonial missions to various settler states. The general movement of woollen blankets overseas during the expansion of the British Empire has also been documented quite extensively in colonial visual culture and archival records around the world. So, beyond the woollen mills in the United Kingdom, observations and narratives from the places where woollen blankets touched down become critical to understanding how and why artists like Assu transform woollen blankets to address its historical presence in Indigenous communities along to the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Through his multimedia sculptural works Assu tackles the past movements of woollen blankets within his own First Nation's community byway of trade interactions, and in doing so highlights the role of woollen blankets in potlatch ceremonies as documented in the oral traditions of Indigenous communities along the Pacific Northwest Coast.

For example, Assu's work entitled, "1884/1951" (FIGURE 21) was first exhibited in 2009 at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Canada) in an exhibition entitled, *How Soon is Now?.* During the exhibition of this work, it was not displayed with a woollen blanket. However, one year later in his self-titled solo exhibition, *Sonny Assu,* installed at Equinox Gallery (Vancouver, British Columbia), Assu used a Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket upon which the sixty-seven copper-cast coffee cups (in the language of Starbucks, these are 'grande' sized cups) rest. In this work, Assu transforms the woollen blanket beyond acting as a plinth or pedestal; he draws attention to the association of two pieces of material culture—copper (cups) and wool (blankets) used in Indigenous ceremonies to represent wealth.

FIGURE 21. Sonny Assu. "1884/1951". 2009.
67 spun copper (Starbucks grande-cup size) cups, HBC blanket.
Photo by Chris Meier. Images courtesy of the Artist and the Equinox Gallery

The specific woollen blanket utilised in Assu's work is no longer produced and is considered by some collectors to be a rare find as it is a maroon coloured, four-point HBC blanket. Assu noted to me that he purchased this woollen blanket on eBay (year and provenance unknown)—yet another example of the movement of the woollen blankets into various venues of contemporary commerce and trade.

We can see from Assu's placement of a woollen blanket into his work within the gallery how this aesthetic and creative gesture makes reference to one of the first historical movements of woollen blankets out of England into the fur trade industry noted in the Introduction. From this historical trajectory of production and distribution, Assu's well-considered use of other materials such as copper also makes the historical movements of the woollen blankets visible. By using copper in the shape of coffee cups, for example, Assu reinforces ones' awareness of how often objects do not necessarily exist in isolation, but rather how they have flowed through time and

space into shared contexts. One shared space beyond the gallery where woollen blankets and copper have co-existed, and continue to today, is within the potlatch ceremony practiced in First Nations communities along the Pacific Northwest Coast as mentioned earlier.

Each copper cup that rests upon the aforementioned woollen blanket represents one year, sixty-seven in total, for which the Indigenous potlatch ceremony was officially banned in Canada following the establishment of the Indian Act in 1885. Duncan Campbell Scott, the then Minister (Superintendent) of Indian Affairs (1913-1932), orchestrated one of the largest colonial campaigns geared at assimilation of Indigneous people into Western culture when he set out to hold regional trials for any Indigenous person who attended or hosted a potlatch. Much anthropological consideration has been given to the social, cultural, and economic importance of this Indigenous ceremony and the ensuing political strife (Boas 1917; Glass 2006; Graber 2001; Mauss 1954). Photographic documentation of the preparation for potlatches shows woollen blankets piled high and photographed often with a person standing either beside or in front of the stacked woollen blankets to give a sense of scale to the accumulated wealth. According Sharon Otness, since “wages were paid in blankets rather than money by some businesses[,] [b]lankets for potlatching and used as "currency" were kept in boxes and stacked in the sleeping areas of the communal houses (Jacobsen 1977). Blankets used in potlatching as a unit of value were cheap white woollen ones from various sources. Boas (1895) noted that they had a single dark bar at each end” (Otness 1979: 58-59).

The active collection of woollen blankets as undecorated and unmodified materials of wealth were accumulated for distribution by the host of the ceremony. In

Chapter Three, the third type of creative human action on woollen blankets in this context of the Pacific Northwest coast emerges when we see how these same woollen blankets were transformed into Indigenous regalia.

The government ban on practicing the potlatch, a critical cultural ceremony that is proven to be integral to maintaining societal balance and reciprocity along the Pacific Northwest coast, resulted from an amendment to the Indian Act in Canada that deemed potlatching to be an illegal act. Under the potlatch ban, any participation in the Indigenous ceremonial event was strictly prohibited thus denying First Nations peoples any engagement with their traditions and any subsequent material culture—woollen blankets, coppers, and other ceremonial items such as regalia (Masco 1995). During this sixty-seven year ban, traditional Indigenous cultural items used in ceremony were confiscated (this is an example of how some objects moved from First Nations communities into collections—public and private—around the world), and fines were levied against those considered violators of the Indian Act (including prison sentences) for participating in their cultural ceremonies. According to the U'mitsa Cultural Society:

> The opponents of the potlatch could only see the custom as a wasteful, immoral and heathen practice, an impediment in the road of progress. In 1883, pressure on the Federal Government by church and civil servants led to proclamation [banning the potlatch ceremony] being issued, followed by legislation a year later on April 19, 1884 which amended the Indian Act to make engaging in the Potlatch a misdemeanor. The original law read:
>
> - Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in a jail or other place of confinement.
> - Any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the

> celebration of same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment.
>
> (U'Mista Cultural Society: http://www.umista.ca/collections/index.php)

In the denial to practice their traditional ceremonies many First Nations were also prohibited from interacting with the material culture that was both produced within their community and introduced through trade and exchange with non-Indigenous communities. As Aaron Glass notes, "[…] objects themselves were not customarily fetishised in Kwakawaka'wakw culture; rather, objects tend to be seen as transient (and replaceable) material embodiments of ephemeral and eternal privileges" (Glass 2006: 23).

In Assu's work, then, the history of the potlatch ban comes to bear on the role of woollen blankets in traditional *Kwakawaka'wakw* ceremonies and in doing so sets woollen blankets in motion alongside other significant material objects denoting wealth such as copper. Assu allows audiences to access history through the materials of woollen blankets and copper in a way that is perhaps not all that removed from making a parallel connection about theories of consumption to current pursuits of wealth in our society—the acquisition of 'grande' lattes and works of art (Miller 2005; 2005b). In conversation with Anne Cottingham, Assu said that when he "spoke with people during it's [sic] installation at the VAG [Vancouver Art Gallery], many said they didn't know that the ban had lasted that long, or even that it had happened so recently" (quoted in Cottingham: 10 September 2011). Again, Cottingham quotes Assu's acknowledgement of the woollen blanket as "a tool of trade, which then became a tool of oppression which then became a tool of genocide" (quoted in Cottingham: September 10, 2011). In moving the woollen blanket into public visibility within the gallery, Assu moves people to be aware of history through material culture

that he transforms and interprets. Assu states: “But the most beneficial experience about that piece was its aspect of passive education. Where I was able to allow people to discover the beauty of the objects, yet discover a dark part of Canada’s history. Which also relates to the US’s history and treatment to it’s [sic] Native American population” (quoted in Baxley: Spring 2011).

In earlier works that predate “1884/1951” (FIGURE 21) Assu also created pieces using woollen blankets such as “Death Blanket” and “The Great Appropriator”. Through both of these works Assu offers an interpretation of button (blanket) robes (see Chapter Three for a discussion of button robes) that makes visible not only the role of Hudson’s Bay Point blankets in traditional regalia in the form of button (blanket) robes, but also moves into visibility (through the scull decorated with buttons on “Death Blanket” and the suggestiveness of its title) the conversation of disease transmission through material objects. Assu also notes: “The HBC blankets were also used to spread small pox and tuberculosis amongst the First People to aid in the act of genocide western society would rather forget” (quoted in Baxley: Spring 2011). In this sense, Assu uses his art to evoke yet another meaningful historical gesticulation associated with the movement of woollen blankets into and out of Indigenous communities in North America.

More recently, Assu’s sculptural works move in the direction of working with visual re-presentations and representations of woollen blankets. In his series entitled “Silenced”, Assu visually transforms hide drums into metaphors for stacked woollen blankets at potlatch ceremonies by painting stretched-hide drums with the signature dark band and small point markings found on woollen blankets as visual triggers. In the “Silenced” series, the woollen blankets become the drums, and the drums the blankets

(FIGURE 22, 23, 24)—both making reference to the role of specific materials in First Nations culture and the repression of the rights of First Nations to practice their culture.

FIGURE 22. Sonny Assu. Silenced #1. 2009.
Acrylic on stacked elk hide drums. Four drums overall dimension 8” x 18” x 18”.
Photo by Chris Meier. Images courtesy of the Artist and the Equinox Gallery

FIGURE 23. Sonny Assu. Silenced #2. 2010.
Acrylic on stacked elk hide drums. Four drums overall dimension 11” x 18” x 18”.
Photo by Chris Meier. Images courtesy of the Artist and the Equinox Gallery

FIGURE 24. Sonny Assu. Silenced: The Hidden. 2011.
Acrylic on 67 animal hide drums. Installation variable.
Photo by Scott Massey. Images courtesy of the Artist and the Equinox Gallery

In the act of stacking drums, Assu makes an explicit reference to the stacks of woollen blankets that were prepared prior to potlatch ceremonies. In the works from the "Silenced" series (FIGURES 22, 23, 24), Assu's reference to the stacking of blankets draws us to other visual representations of stacked blankets that emerges often from the documentary work of both photographers and anthropologists who conducted ethnographic fieldwork along the Pacific Northwest coast. This was also noted earlier in relation to the quote from Otness. As seen in archival images from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (FIGURE 25), one of many examples of such photographs, granted this is an image of a Haida community, where woollen blankets are documented piled high and deep for their eventual distribution at a potlatch ceremony. Therefore, Assu's "visual quotation", to pirate a phrase from Patricia Vervoort, to stacked woollen blankets emerges not only from ethnographic photographs such as this (FIGURE 25),

but notably from Indigenous oral traditions that commemorate momentous ceremonies of this significant traditional practice not only in Assu's *Kwakwaka'wakw* community of the *We Wai Kai First Nation* (Cape Mudge), but along the Pacific Northwest Coast in many First Nations communities (Vervoort 2004: 469).

FIGURE 25. Potlatch at Fort Rupert. Piles of Hudson's Bay "Point" blankets are being counted out for giving away. Haida canoes are drawn up on the beach. ca. 1890. Photograph by H.I. Smith. Image Courtesy the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba. HBCA 1987/363-W-114

CASE STUDY: *MARIE WATT (United States)*

Since 2003, Marie Watt (*Seneca*) has worked with woollen blankets. Studying her oeuvre, as Gell would suggest, shows how her early actions on blanket have anticipated her current imaginative and transformative works of art, while elements of her current practice contain traces from her earlier works (Born 2013). Watt's work has ranged from her more recent towering totem pole-like structures made of stacked

woollen blankets, to large-scale stitched installations that hang upon the wall like a tapestry when installed in the gallery, to her small intimate "sampler" works. In particular, Watt's *Blanket Series* (FIGURE 26), started in 2003, is a strong example of how the woollen blanket, what Watt calls a "humble yet loaded object",[42] is transformed from a serviceable *thing* into a work of art (Dobkins 2012: 56).[43] Her most recent and largest work that I discuss in depth here, a welcome pole, was made of donated blankets of various kinds and materials from people across North America that were accompanied by stories of love, loss, birth, travel, home, youth, and life.

FIGURE 26. Marie Watts. *Great Registry: Ledger Shown in foreground. Background, from left: Canopy (Omphalos), 2007; Custodian, 2007; The Ballad of Ira Hayes, 2008*. 45 × 30 × 30 inches Bronze, wool blankets and cedar

[42] In *The System of Objects*, Jean Baudrillard also refers to "objects as humble" (Baudrillard 1996: 26).

[43] Marie Watt is a multidisciplinary artist currently based in Portland, Oregon (USA). "Born in 1967 to the son of Wyoming ranchers and a daughter of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation (Iroquois / Haudenosaunee) Watt identifies herself as "half Cowboy and half Indian." Formally, her work draws from [I]ndigenous design principles, oral tradition, personal experience, and Western art history. Her approach to art-making is shaped by the proto-feminism of Iroquois matrilineal custom, political work by Native artists in the 60s, a discourse on multiculturalism, as well as Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. Like Jasper Johns, she is interested in "things that the mind already knows." Unlike the Pop artists, she uses a vocabulary of natural materials (stone, cornhusks, wool, cedar) and forms (blankets, pillows, bridges) that are universal to human experience (though not uniquely American) and noncommercial in character" (Marie Watt Website, available at, http://www.mkwatt.com/, last accessed 12 September 2013).

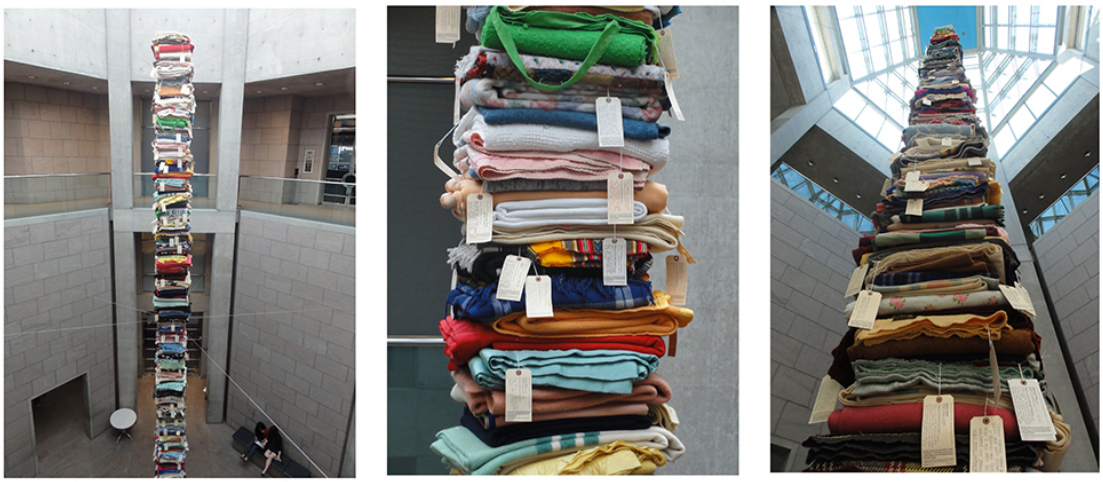

FIGURE 27. Marie Watt. Installation Views
***Blanket Stories: Seven Generations, Adawe, and Hearth*. 2011.**
National Gallery of Canada. Photographs by Fiona P. McDonald

The site-specific work, "Blanket Stories: Seven Generations, Adawe, and Hearth" (2013) (FIGURE 27) was installed at the National Gallery of Canada as a key work in the first *quinquennial* exhibition, *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* (May-September 2013). Comprised of donated blankets from around the world for a commissioned artwork for *Sakahàn*, I worked in Watt's studio during its making as blankets of various types arrived. Scanning each blanket and the label that accompanied the blanket (or fragment of blanket in some cases) made visible to me how Watt's work was central to shifting contexts of materials that captures a better understanding of how society values artworks. In many cases, the donated blankets had sentimental value and were accompanied by stories of birth, marriage, travel, and the use of some blankets at holiday homes. However, the owners of the blankets who valued them for their sentimental economy also saw great cultural relevance in shifting their use into a work of art. In this case, Watt's agency as an artist allowed her to transform the blankets as an element of an artwork by recontextulaising their use within the frame of not only a

national art gallery, but within the frame of an Indigenous contemporary art exhibition. Interestingly, when speaking with a gallery attendant at Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto (Ottawa, Canada) about Liz Magor's work, she noted to me "it is no longer a blanket when it becomes a work of art." During conversations about the woollen blankets in relation to the articulation of cultural heritage, Watt conveyed that she often felt blankets had more resonance to her as an heirloom and as "markers of memory" in addressing personal histories and uses of blankets.

Watt, who is from the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation (*Iroquois/Haudenosaunee*) is fully aware of the history of woollen blankets as a trade item between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the United States. She speaks about the woollen blanket as, what Bill Brown might call, a storied object. Watt notes:

> Blankets hang around in our lives and families—they gain meaning through use. My work is about social and cultural histories imbedded in commonplace objects. I consciously draw from Indigenous design principles, oral traditions, and personal experience to shape the inner logic of the work I make. These wool blankets come from family, friends, acquaintances and secondhand stores (I'll buy anything under $5). As friends come over and witness my blanket project in progress, I am struck by how the blankets function as markers for their memories and stories.[44]

It is hard to discuss Watt's work without referencing her most heavily cited statements on her own work. Watt writes:

> We are received in blankets, and we leave in blankets. […] I am interested in human stories and rituals implicit in everyday objects. […] I find myself attracted to the blanket's two- and three-dimensional qualities: On a wall, a blanket functions as a tapestry, but on a body it functions as a robe and living art object. Blankets also serve a utilitarian function. As I fold and

[44] Marie Watt website, available at, http://mkwatt.com/index.php/content/work_detail/category/blanket_stories_objects/, last accessed 13 August 2012.

> stack blankets, they begin to form columns that have references to linen closets, architectural braces, memorials (The Trajan Column), sculpture (Brancusi, for one), the great totem poles of the Northwest and the conifer trees around which I grew up. In Native American communities, blankets are given away to honor people for being witnesses to important life events – births and comings-of-age, graduations and marriages, namings and honorings. For this reason, it is considered as great a privilege to give a blanket away as it is to receive one (Marie Watt Website).

While a lengthy description of her work, Watt's own words illuminate an individual biographic narrative of why and how woollen blankets are consumed in general from an Indigenous perspective, and how this has been a catalyst to her earlier works in the *Blanket Series*.[45] When these stories are considered not only in relation to Watt's larger art practice, but also in relation to theoretical frameworks around the anthropology of memory and the connection to how material responses through aesthetic means can and do elicit memories through materials.

Also evident in Watt's statement above are some of the first person values and meanings presented in this thesis that she brings to her interpretation of the woollen blanket. According to curator and anthropologist Rebecca J. Dobkins, who curated Watt's work in an exhibition entitled *Lodge* at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art (2012), "Watt began to use woolen blankets as a form and material as well as conceptual vehicles [in her *Blanket Series*]. The blankets [in Watt's work] carry associations not only with an array of life experiences but specifically with tribal communities, which have a long history of exchanging blankets for resources and other goods with settlers and traders as well as marking life transitions with the giving and receiving of blankets"

[45] Please see APPENDIX 7 Testimony of Textiles for a sample of another narrative that was casually elicited when describing my research project to an acquaintance in London who is from Aotearoa New Zealand. Unbeknownst to me as a method of memory evocation, I simply stated: "I am studying woollen trade blankets…you know the grey ones that have stripes…" From this conversation I was made aware of another use of these specific blankets that were integral to a young man's rite of passage in the Boy Scouts in Aotearoa New Zealand.

(Dobkins 2012: 35). While Dobkin's addresses the way woollen blankets have been engaged with historically from their exchange-value to gift-value (that begs a reading from a Marxist commodity fetish, or a Maussian notion of the gift), art historian Janet Catherine Berlo unpacks Watt's work to suggest that her use of woollen blankets "evoke[s] a 500-year saga of inter-cultural relations" (Berlo 2005: 112). Watt's own statements regarding her work with woollen blankets, however, favour a reading of this *thing* in relation to their (e)valuation of it as an heirloom. As Watt states: "My work explores human stories and rituals implicit in everyday objects. I am interested in wool blankets and their heirloom-like quality. Freud considered blankets as 'transitional' objects, but I like to consider how these humble pieces of cloth are *transformational*" (Watt cited in Dobkins 2012: 72). This transformational dimension *is* the transformation of woollen blankets from serviceable objects into an artistic medium. And the infinite possibilities of the *transformational* quality of the woollen blanket have allowed Watt to use this object to engage diverse experiences with its histories, values, and meanings.

Watt's works demonstrate that the permutations and combinations of mapping the significations and values of woollen blankets are as unpredictable as the people who experience her work. Dobkin's has suggested that Watt's works have the sensibility of Joseph Beuys' "social sculptures", as was discussed earlier in relation to Leah Decter's project, and that Watt often organises "Sewing Circles" prior to her exhibitions at galleries, as well as in her studio. Dobkins argues this thread to Beuys by stating, "art should be participatory and has the power to affect transformations in the self and society" (Dobkins 2012: 11), and from having personally participated in one of

Watt's more informal Sewing Circle's in her studio with friends this is a very experiential exercise as well.

During time in her studio and through interviews and conversations, Watt consistently referenced the importance of Sewing Circle for her work as a way to socialise and likened it to the same social organising that she recalls taking place within communities. It is a coming together analogous to "raise a barn together" and that "many hands make light work". Watt went on to clarify that it is a vital form of social networking, and she truly values participants' time and skills by rewarding them with food and tokens of gratitude (such an original print of her work). This gesture on Watt's part was evidenced even in the collaborative nature of, "Blanket Stories: Seven Generations, Adawe, and Hearth" (2013) (FIGURE 27) where each person who donated a blanket was given an original silkscreen print by Watt. Overall, Watt values the Sewing Circle in her practice and material process as an opportunity to "learn from each other" through natural conversation and communal efforts to bring a work into existence beyond her conceptual imagination.

When works from Watt's *Blanket Series* are installed in a gallery setting, a book is left in the gallery to allow others to record their responses and sentiments to not only her work, but their personal responses to interacting with woollen blankets in an non-domestic setting. From conversations with Watt, I have learned that these statements in the book tend to address personal memories evoked by the materiality of the work evoked by experiencing the woollen blanket within the context of a gallery.[46] The book, then, is an "extension for the life the piece" of art. As in Decter's work (FIGURE 20) the book is central to the process of activating messages and

[46] Personal Communication with Marie Watt, April 2012.

symbols on the surfaces of the blankets. Citing from Berlo, again, Watt notes in reference to a work: “My history is woven into these blankets, along with the wool, thread, and souls of […] friends who sat around the pieces hand-stitching and story-telling, and transforming the blankets one more time” (Berlo 2005: 116).

While Watt’s work articulates multiple meanings and values at once, her transformations consciously engenders the mutability of the woollen blanket through, at times, the incorporation of “recontextualisation” (Thomas 1997: 18) as critical to the process of transformation. The *Blanket Series* overall offers a number of iterations, transformations, and experiences where it is apparent that Watt’s personal experiences with blankets, as well as the viewer’s own material and sensory experience, can all play out through each context.

On top of her stitching, Watt’s extended relationship with the materials is particularly relevant. While Watt and others sew the blankets into new forms for contemplation and movement into the artwork, Watt also folds and stacks blankets as part of her process. She shared with me the reality that her sustained engagement with blankets has also allowed her to “use the materials to push her art practice in a new direction” where she can now work intellectually beyond its form as a blanket or object and concentrate on its physical properties that elucidate the metaphoric qualities. A statement by Tim Ingold seems pertinent here when he notes that “[t]he experience practitioner’s knowledge of the properties of materials, like that of the alchemist, is not projected onto them but grows out of a lifetime of close engagement in a particular craft or trade. As [Chantal] Conneller (2011: 5) contends, ‘different understandings of materials are not simply ‘concepts’ set apart from ‘real’ properties;

they are realised in terms of different practices that themselves have material effects'" (Ingold 2012: 434).

CASE STUDY: *JO TORR (Aotearoa New Zealand)*

The larger oeuvre and sculptural works of artist Jo Torr are a rich example of how woollen blankets are transformed through the *re-historicisation* of historical weaving techniques, materials, and fashions from the late-eighteenth through to the early-nineteenth century. In 2011, Jo Torr and Māori weaver Roka Ngarimu-Cameron (*Te Whanau-a-Āpanui, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Awa, Te Ārawa, Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Airihi*) collaborated on an exhibition entitled, *Nga Kakahu: Change and Exchange* at the Pataka Museum (Porirua, Aotearoa New Zealand).[47] In the exhibition, Torr's sculptural work "Ngore" (FIGURE 28), a title that literally translates as a type of Māori cloak with *taaniko* (woven) borders and vertical *aho* (weft rows) made from *muka* (processed flax fibre). In this instance, Torr acknowledges that she uses the tools of craft and fashion but as an artist, and that she consciously uses them to sculptural ends. Therefore, rather than having a *taaniko* (woven) border, Torr used the woollen blanket as a canvas to mimic "needlepoint" that she cross-stitches in order to replicate the *taaniko* (woven) element. Torr's works captures the use of woollen blankets and weaving techniques in a cross-cultural engagement through material culture, and as Torr described to me, it is "sculpture taking the form of garments with historical and Polynesian references."

[47] A solo exhibition of *Nga Kakahu* by Jo Torr was originally exhibited at the Tauranga Art Gallery (2009) by curator Penelope Jackson. The 2011 exhibition and collaboration with Roka Ngarimu-Cameron, *Nga Kakahu: Change and Exchange* was curated by Helen Kedgley at the Pataka Museum (2011).

FIGURE 28. Jo Torr. *Ngore*. 2011.
Woollen blankets, thread, and cotton. Images courtesy the artist

Torr's sculptural works are imaginative explorations that draw upon her interpretations of the history of cross-cultural contact in an Aotearoa New Zealand-specific context. The works created for this exhibition "play off against each other [thus] generating a range of conversations about cross cultural adaptation and change" between Māori and European material culture and weaving practices.[48,49] As the exhibition title suggests—*Change and Exchange*—both the materials and the sculptures underscore the introduction of woollen blankets and European weaving techniques to the Antipodes during the long-eighteenth century with a stronger presence of new materials found during the nineteenth century. For Torr, the woollen blanket stands in as a "metaphor for muka fibre" as she evokes a visual awareness of the materiality of history in Aotearoa New Zealand.

[48] *Nga Kakahu: Change and Exchange*, exhibition panel. Pataka Museum, Poirua, New Zealand, 2011.
[49] Torr notes that she "chose the cream coloured blankets to stand in for the muka [flax fibres] used in [traditional Māori] cloaks" (Jo Torr, email communication to the author, 26 June 2011).

Torr makes no claim to being an historian, however like her peer, Suzanne Tamaki, whose work was discussed earlier, they both uses archival images to inform how they transform specific materials. Torr's work embraces what she calls a creative and imaginative "what if" element. The history or story of a specific woollen blanket used in any one of Torr's sculptures is not prioritised or even important to Torr in the anthropological sense of Igor Koytoff's ideas around an objects' cultural biography, whereby objects become imbued with a specific narrative; but rather the woollen blanket is Torr's medium for her sculptural works.

The narrative of a woollen blanket as an object of familiarity or as part of an individual's memory when made manifest through art has a certain resonance in Aotearoa New Zealand. This familiarity is because the woollen blankets used in Torr's sculptures are proudly acknowledged on labels as being '100% pure wool blankets made in New Zealand,' and relate to the history of the woollen manufacturing I addressed earlier.[50,51,52] This history of mills in Aotearoa New Zealand is expanded upon in Chapter Two. However, according to Torr, the woollen blankets she uses and the labels affixed to them are "referring to an historic thing and a modern thing. Referring to Māori and European thing. It's also about relating something as unlikely as a blanket being made into a gown. And hopefully allowing people to think about Maori cloaks" and Aotearaoa New Zealand's history.

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[50] There are a diverse range of woollen blankets found in New Zealand prior to the popularity of the duvet and synthetic fabrics introduced in the early-1970s and 1980s. Special thanks to Sue MacMillian of SEAM designs (NZ) for sharing with me G.J. McLean's *Spinning Yarns: A Centennial History of Alliance Textiles Limited and its Predecessors 1881-1981* (Dunedin: Alliance Textile Limited, 1981).

[51] There are three main islands that constitute New Zealand—North Island, South Island, and Stewart Island.

[52] The technology of these weaving mills was established upon the knowledge of mills in England since the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth century (which in turn has connections to the weaving practices in France).

Torr's use of blankets for *Nga Kakahu: Change and Exchange* sits in a continuum of works she has created that includes a 2005 exhibition entitled, *Tupaia's Paintbox* at The City Gallery (Wellington, New Zealand). This exhibit examines the complexity of the tactility of Aotearoa New Zealand's multi-cultural history. According to the curators who organised this exhibition:

> Although her works draw on historical documents and events, Jo Torr is not restaging history. She is a contemporary artist working in the contemporary world and, as such, she is part of an increasing dialogue surrounding clothes and identity within the Pacific region (City Gallery Wellington website, available at, http://citygallery.org.nz/jo-torr/, last accessed 18 April 2011).

As a contemporary artist who draws from historical and archival traces of Aotearoa New Zealand's material history, Torr noted to me that her works are not artefacts but rather that they are sculptures.

In general, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century trade and exploration to the Antipodes saw the introduction of new material goods that instigated a "refashioning" of both traditional Indigenous clothing and attitudes towards material goods. This has been evidenced in other works presented early by Suzanne Tamaki and Ngaahina Hohaia (FIGURE 17). By using historical documents and imagery in our current historical moment, Torr's works expose a non-Indigenous artistic and imaginative perspective of the unique history of relations between Māori, Pacific, and European cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand—both past and present.[53] Returning to

[53] Granted, most of this is evidenced in materials accessioned in ethnology collections from the turn of the nineteenth century. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Gottfried Lindauer, George F. Angus, and Charles Goldie in general, also document the introduction of woollen blankets, and woollen products in their paintings from the early-nineteenth century. Their paintings offer a visual sketch of many material objects found in museums that remain as corporeal evidence of the weaving of western and Indigenous materials together. However, more than this, these historical paintings are the tangible and visual traces, or what Patricia Vervoort calls "visual quotations" of oral histories and narratives that emerged during or out of the voyages of

Nicholas Thomas again, he notes that "[i]n the antipodean settler colonies, anxieties around national identities have often been negotiated through art, and conversely, the value of art has often been adjudicated on the basis of its local authenticity and its adequacy as a vehicle for national distinctiveness" (Thomas 2001: 139). In the case of materials such as recycled woollen blankets, while they have a distinct history in relation to exploration of distinct historical periods, they are also specific to the historical moment in that they *were* "Made in New Zealand".[54] But the woollen blanket becomes an active tool in our current historical moment in how Torr herself as a European New Zealander negotiates an imaginative space within the complexities and narratives that come to light in exhibition policies and practices in Aoteaora New Zealand.

CASE STUDY: *TRACEY WILLIAMS (Aotearoa New Zealand)*

A fourth example, contemporary multimedia artist Tracey Williams takes up the malleability of woollen blankets through her site-specific installation entitled, "My Ship | Tēnei Wakahēra" (FIGURE 29) exhibited at the Tauranga Art Gallery—*Toi Tauranga* in 2009.[55] Composed of several components—two-channel video projection of still

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colonial explorers (Patricia Vervoort, "Edward S. Curtis's 'Representations': Then and Now," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34 (2004): 463-484).

[54] Fashion Designer Paula Coulthard also situates history on fabric—on blankets. Melding what she states as the "textures of cloth and time." Coulthard uses old blankets to make coats and embroiders cushions with line drawings of tall ships that were navigated by explorers such as The Endeavour. Coulthard's exhibition *Rugged and Ragged* (2009) at Native Agent (Auckland) captures the long-eighteenth century through flags, coats, light boxes, and dioramas containing histories of cross-cultural contact (Paula Coulthard, homepage, accessed 12 January 2011, http://paulacoulthard.blogspot.com/2009/08/exhibition-at-native-agent.html).

[55] Tracey Williams is a multidisciplinary artist based in Auckland, New Zealand. She obtained her MFA with Honours from the University of Auckland (Elam School of Fine Arts). She has exhibited widely in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States and her work takes up the notion of "little narratives" nested in larger meta-narratives. Williams is a founding member of

images that captured sixty-seven constellations, a looped video work of a model boat that floated in and out of the frame, a sculptural ship clad in woollen blankets and "renewed" textiles (Kuechler 2009), as well site-specific elements mounted to walls—the larger context of this work speaks to Williams's exhaustive research into the region's local histories to move past "master" narratives by looking "[s]pecifically [for] a little history or a forgotten history or some kind of tangential history."

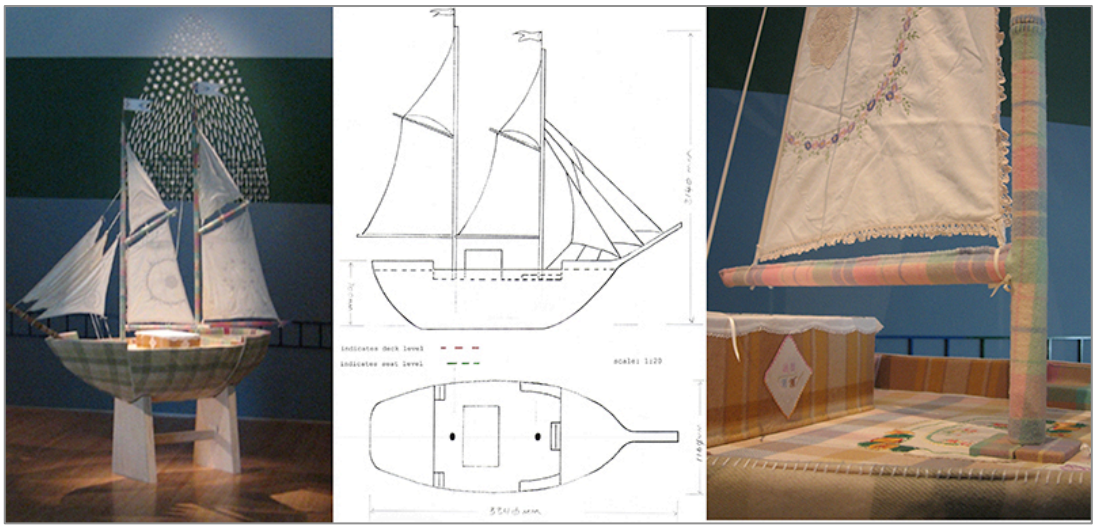

FIGURE 29. Tracey Williams. My Ship | Tēnei Wakahēra. 2009.
Image courtesy the artist and The Tauranga Art Gallery

In the creation of this work, Williams noted: "I went looking for sub texts of Tauranga Moana's multifarious written history. I wanted to spotlight the points that meta narratives unravel, rupture[,] and split. This was an amnesic experience. Smaller narratives still interlace popular history, concealing private stories. […] Unexpectedly, the information I sought was lyrically embedded in old textiles and craftwork. The[se] objects inherently cite Otherness, holding implicit narratives. They are containers of ephemeral and intangible aspects of identity; and preservers of oblique cultural tales.

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the community-based artistic group The Friendly Girls Society, and a founding member of the research-based group Paper Does Not Refuse Ink.

They also signify protection and labour" (Williams and Jackson 2009: 1). This mention of the history of labour illuminates yet another value associated with woollen blankets, their manufacture, and their transportation to settler states.

Aotearoa New Zealand had its own woollen mill industry that lasted from the late-nineteenth century until approximately the mid-1980s. Throughout the life-span of this industry, these mills manufactured woollen blankets similar to those imported from England. The difference was the mills in Aotearoa New Zealand produced plaid-patterned and plain coloured blankets whose essentialised materiality bode well in the damp, cool winter months in the South Pacific. Mills such as Petone Woollen Mills, Mosgiel, Omaru, and Robinswurl are just a few examples of woollen blankets used in Williams works that are artefacts from the key mills that supported communities across both the North and South Islands. Williams used only woollen blankets manufactured by these mills as a ready-made material on her sculptural ship.

Looking to the designs of the aforementioned ships captained by Abel Tasman and Captain Cook, Williams collaborated with a local ship builder to design and hand build her own ship—one that fuses together elements from a variety of historical vessels, but doesn't represent a single one.[56] According to Williams, the ship is an "allegory of hope and desire." In preparation of her sculptural ship, Williams sought out textiles similar to those aboard these ships that she would subsequently transform as cladding of the ship's hull, deck, and masts. In appropriating and transforming

[56] Tracey Williams. Personal Communication 20 July 2011. "I like the way the work becomes ambiguous. I like that ambiguity. That's why with the ship itself I made sure it didn't look like *a* specific ship so that people couldn't go 'oh that it's the such-and-such' or 'it's this ship'. I took a whole lot of ships from the periods I was interested in and I kind of extrapolated bits of them and made my own ship. In the end that is why it is called "My Ship." Because that is the only position I can really speak from with authority. […] You can take on the whole of these histories and go out looking for these histories where you find some little narrative that will hold a spotlight to you [for] you [to] know history in another way."

woollen blankets into her art as a ready-made material, Williams makes visible the material qualities that seem impractical for a ship and the labour involved in this transformation. By literally wrapping the hull and masts of the ship in blankets, Williams unwraps the history of labour associated with the woollen blanket in Aoteaora New Zealand, and the labour involved in articulating the "conceptual framework" and "historical content" of "My Ship | Tēnei Wakahēra". Gathering together a community of sewers, she employed the skills of several women to blanket stitch this project together. In response to the woollen blanket materials on the boat, Williams noted that visitors, mostly women, said, "Oh I know this stuff. I made this stuff." Here eliciting local histories and experiences whereby the woollen blanket acts as a material that enchants to elicte memories of labour.[57]

The woollen blankets, for Williams, is "a way of materially talking to some of the other ideas" such as the complexity of colonial histories and "some of the darker politics of trading between European and Māori." But in talking to these histories through the use of a specific object, Williams felt she was also "talking to ideas of woman's histories [that] are never mentioned in the histories like in those mainstream narratives. Those culture-defining narratives are always by men for men and they are linear. […] [W]e don't hold onto those histories of labour and the histories of love which is what sort of underpins that. The people that stitched and made the blankets and not just the blankets but made the meals and made the clothes." Conscious of the symbols she uses—ships, birds, land, sea, and storied textiles—Williams notes that through her larger methodology (if we refer back to Danto's comment earlier about

[57] Coincidently this same exact statement/declaration was something I, too, experienced while doing fieldwork in craft markets in Aotearoa New Zealand. See Chapter Two.

using objects and materials laden with meaning) “you are maybe taking something and you are reprocessing it and representing it; but it is all to do with and all tied up with these histories and the distribution of knowledge […].”

CASE STUDY: *RONA NGAHUIA OSBORNE (Aotearoa New Zealand)*

The final example is a discussion of the works by installation artist and designer Rona Ngahuia Osborne (FIGURES 30, 31, 32). Throughout my research on woollen blankets in Aotearoa New Zealand, her cushions and blankets were the most heavily referenced “blanket art” identified to me by other artists, craftspeople, curators, collectors, and consumers. At every turn and interview, I was systematically pointed toward Osborne’s work. And, interestingly, it was Osborne’s work that first made me aware that there might be a phenomenon of use of woollen blankets back in 2009.

Having exhibited her work widely in Aotearoa New Zealand since around 2002, Osborne created a body of work using “recycled woollen blankets that referenced her family history[.] [T]he works also commented on the history of trade and exchange [sic] in Aotearoa. Using embroidered images depicting iconography such as the musket, flora and fauna, and extinct or endangered birds” (website, available at http://www.nativeagent.co.nz/pages/about-us). Around 2006, Osborne extended her work to a homeware line and opened up the business, *Native Agen*t (FIGURE 32) with her late-mother-in-law, Lindsay. The mission of *Native Agent* is evidenced in all of the various works Osborne creates from transformed blankets:

> *Native Agent* provides an aesthetic response to the changing social paradigms of colonisation. It talks about the coming together of the many faces of Aotearoa, both Maori and Pakeha, New and old. Native Agent's work explores the relationship between the physical, material form; and oratory, story telling, communication. Native Agent informs and challenges

> accepted ideas and thoughts. Native Agent presents products that reflect something of our combined histories, and add to our sense of identity. These are objects that capture something of our natural environment, our wild places, our past. Made by, and for New Zealanders. We hope to reinforce a sense of identity and pride. Native Agent offers the astute tourist an insight into our culture. We hope to encourage an educational approach to all our products. We are honoured to be *kaitiaki* [guardian] of both *taonga* [treasured thing—tangible and intangible] and ideas. We hope to impart this knowledge with the respect in which it is given to us (my emphasis added, Facebook page, available at https://www.facebook.com/nativeagent/info, last accessed 6 May 2013).

During my fieldwork, Rona permitted me to volunteer in the *Native Agent* shop for several weeks in order to observe how her customers interact with her work. During this time, I quickly became familiar with scope of Osborne's work from bed covers, to cushions, bed runners, and wall hangings. In observing shop visitors—regulars and tourists—I was able to take note of how people interacted with the work and specifically with the material. During conversations while Osborne worked on commissions in her studio below the shop she shared with me the insight into the two sets of visual imagery she uses. "One is militaristic and the other is the gentle ones […] it is often the gentle ones that sell more." According to Osborne, the gentle imagery consists of words like *aroha* (love) or flora and fauna native to Aotearoa New Zealand. Whereas the militaristic imagery consists of line-drawings of muskets that were central to historic battles and colonial tensions between Māori and the Crown. The role muskets and woollen blankets played as trade goods for Māori owned land prior to and during the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), as well as reference to the 28th Māori Battalion that fought for New Zealand during World War II (specifically commemorating their sacrifices in Tunisia) comes out clearly in the choice of imagery Osborne places on woollen blankets.

In the shop, customer responses to both the blankets and the imagery were profoundly illuminating of the ways histories and textiles in Aotearoa New Zealand evoke narratives. For example, in many instances customers in groups of two or more often noted "I had that blanket". Here, they were making reference to a specific colour or pattern (see Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of the types of blankets produced in Aotearoa New Zealand). Others, including Osborne, conveyed to me that woollen blankets were transformed into cushions, quilts, and bed runners as "heirlooms". Osborne's transformation becomes a self-conscious creative action upon the materials of woollen blankets that create cultural value in the history of blankets within Aotearoa New Zealand. By openly addressing fraught cultural tensions through her work, she uses woollen blankets to mediate conflicted experiences with history, and in doing so creates identity through the blanket.

FIGURE 30. Rona Ngahuia Osborne. *Native Agent 12-panel quilt***.** 2010. Woollen blankets, cotton. Image courtesy the artist

FIGURE 31. Native Agent Trade Cushions with "Militaristic" and "Gentle" Imagery. 2011. Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

FIGURE 32. Native Agent Shop and Studio (Kingsland, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand). 2011. Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

Osborne's various works span from art to design, and are also part of her rich collaborations with other artists. Some examples include a work with international fashion photographer Daniel K. Shields (FIGURE 33); and with the late industrial designer Bob Macdonald (FIGURE 34), are useful to showing how transformed woollen blankets and textiles have been used to blur the lines of creative output along the art-craft continuum discussed in Chapter Two. This is central to how Fred Myers, when citing from the work of Christopher Steiner, states that "[a]t each point in [a *things*] movement through space and time, an object has the potential to shift from one category to another, and in doing so, to slide along the slippery line that divides art

from artifact from commodity", and in this case art from craft from tradition (Myers 2001: 11).

The use of woollen blankets by artists in both North America and Aotearoa New Zealand draws attention to the social networks that the artists consciously participate within both locally and globally. Relating this to Gell's ideas around the social relations that coalesce around materials, in the case of woollen blankets, these social relations start locally and extend globally within the art worlds of both Indigenous art and Western art.

FIGURE 33. David K. Shields. Wet & Wild. 2011.
Featuring the work of Native Agent for Stil Magazine (Australia)[58]

[58] Theme: **"**Stylist Dean P. Rushworth creates looks that evoke Colonial era New Zealand, complete with top hats, long skirts and a touch of wild, native styling" (David K. Shield, available at http://davidkshields.tumblr.com/post/29499352049/stil-magazine-australia-nz-2011-wet-wild)/

FIGURE 34. Bob Macdonald & Rona Ngahuia Osborne. 2009.
Woollen blankets, cotton. Image courtesy the artist

Materials, Networks, and Dialogues—local to global

Put simply, where and how materials are moved into and through art worlds depends first upon artists' actions and intentions in transforming woollen blankets into works of art, and the second upon the curators who select these works for exhibition. Of the seven case studies presented in the second half of this chapter, three were by Indigenous artists (Marie Watt, Sonny Assu, Rona Ngahuia Osborne) and four by non-Indigenous artists (Liz Magor, Leah Decter, Jo Torr, and Tracey William). Two of the works by non-Indigenous artists, Jo Torr and Leah Decter's, however, both used the woollen blanket to consciously engage with local aesthetics relating to Indigenous material histories. Within Indigenous art contexts that are defined locally by the artists' home, and globally by where they exhibit their works, it is evident that there has been an escalated presence of woollen blankets moving throughout multiple art

worlds since the 1980s. For the remainder of this chapter, I turn to talk specifically about how materials are used by artists to situate themselves, their knowledge of local Indigenous histories, experiences, and aesthetics within Indigenous global art world frameworks.

Historically, Indigenous art has often be relegated and judged by art worlds based on the use of materials. Shuffled into museum collections and presented as artefacts disassociated from the culture and its makers. With the demand for "authentic" Indigenous works by buyers in tourist markets and niche collectors, there was also a call for works made from "traditional materials" that were read as pre-contact for exhibition in museums and art galleries (Graburn 1976; Merlhan 2001; Myers; 2006; Penny 2002; Phillips 1998, 2002, 2004, 2012; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Rickard 2002; Russell 2012; Stocking 1985; Townsend-Gault, 2004). The discrimination in materials over time by curators and collectors has proven to be problematic and reductive for many contemporary Indigenous artists wishing to exhibit both within Indigenous art contexts and be discussed within Western art histories. I would suggest that, in some instances, the use of woollen blankets has been transformational in the cultural action of decolonising materials as cross-culturally legible. For example, as part of one of the second iteration of the Indigenous art touring exhibition, *Changing Hangs: Art Without Reservation 2* (2005) organised by the Eitljorg Foundation, Holly Hotchner, in the Foreword to the catalogue, comments:

> The repertoire of traditional Native materials used in making objects has changed dramatically over time: skins and furs used for clothing were replaced by manufactured textiles; metal needles, thread, and thimbles replaced bone and sinew; decorative porcupine quills were outshone by a profusion of sparking glass trade beads; and even buffalo robes gave way to Pendleton and Hudson's Bay blankets as ceremonial regalia. While many

> Native artists are re-discovering traditional materials in their work, andequal number have embraced new materials and techniques that ground the works in the present (Hotchner 2005).

This use of 'new materials' like woollen blankets shows how artists self-consciously select materials that bring a cross-cultural legibility to their work in multiple art contexts—local and global, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous.

Indigenous artists have recently brought local art worlds, like those defined nationally in Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada, and the United States together and into conversation through large-scale exhibitions that focus specifically upon contemporary or customary-inspired Indigenous art. Through such presentations, what becomes visible though the works selected for exhibition are the shared dialogues, experiences, and narratives that connect people through the materials they use in relation to colonial settler experiences.

In following the woollen blankets into artists' studios, observing the various transformative actions as process, and marking out how their actions address the local histories of woollen blankets, what became most visiblea are the public spaces where these works are eventually consumed. As I stated at the outset of this thesis, consumption is part of the process of transformation—not the final destination of objects and materials. Therefore the exhibition of transformed materials is part of the process of moving materials into public "spheres of activity" like art galleries (Myers 2001: 32). This movement allows for shared experiences in the material world that subsequently articulate local experiences and aesthetics.

For example, in the 2013 exhibition, *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa) mentioned previously in the discussion of Marie Watt's work (FIGURE 27), not only was her work with woollen blankets exhibited as a

central piece to anchor the show, but also the work of Sonny Assu (FIGURE 21) (additionally, Kent Monkman also had a work that included a woollen blanket) was included in this exhibition. These Indigenous artists, through their actions on woollen blankets become central actors within a complex network of global Indigenous art where they mediate their participation through the materials in their artworks.

Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art was curated by Greg Hill (*Mohawk, Six Nations*), Candice Hopkins (*Carcross/Tagish First Nation*), and Christine Lalonde. Organised as the first ever quinquennial (based on the biennial model to happen every five years) of Indigenous contemporary art at the National Gallery of Canada, the curators identified their project as the largest curatorial undertaking in history that gathers together Indigenous artists from around the world. As one of the three curators, Christine Lalonde, noted, "*Sakahàn* includes artists who identify themselves as Indigenous and as part of this specify their cultural affiliations" (Lalonde 2013: 15). The curators and a board of advisors were responsible for selecting artists. In order to represent only contemporary works it was collectively decided that artworks had to have been made within ten years prior to the *Sakahàn* exhibition. But in the ten years that led up to the call for such an exhibition of international Indigenous art, the larger discourse that extended the local to the global Indigenous was profound.

In 2002, artist, critic, and scholar Jolene Rickard (*Tuscarora*) weighed in the conversation of Indigenous representation in museums and art gallery that had already been started by key scholars across various disciplines and cultures (Phillips 1999, Graeburn 1986, Myers 1991). I argue that Rickard's arguments over the past decade have greatly contributed to the framework that defines the issues and demands of the

global Indigenous art world today. In her chapter "After Essay—Indigenous Is the Local" published in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery,* edited by Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg, Rickard approaches the local from the insider perspective. Her stance is notably political at times as she traces out the complexity of sovereignty and issues of representation, but her ideas are completely interwoven into those expressed by emerging Indigenous curators like Hill, Hopkins, and Lalonde. As Rickard notes, "[i]t is impossible to overlook the powerful contribution that First Nations artists, curators, educators, and non-Native arts professionals have made in bringing the consciousness of Native people to the national stage" (Rickard 2002: 118). This consciousness, however, is presented through the work of arts selected by the *Sakahàn* curators, and made by the artists who select materials like woollen blankets that have a distinct legibility in this global discussion.

In her exhibition text for *Sakahàn* entitled, "The Emergence of Global Indigenous Art", Rickard argues that the term 'global Indigenous art' "encompasses only those artists whose works show an acknowledgement of the ongoing conditions of colonial settler nations, the continuing dispossession of land and resources, and an awareness of Indigenous worldviews as part of the future of global culture" (Rickard 2013: 54). However, she rightly notes that "Indigenous expressive culture has always been geographically global since European contact in 1492, or, if that is too fine a point, the 1400s as a marker of modernity" (Rickard 2013: 54). As we have seen in many of the examples throughout this chapter, reference to cross-cultural interaction and material experiences continues today in multiple art contexts and art worlds.

The global movement of materials is also the global movement and mobilisation of ideas, ideologies, and identities. By following the woollen blanket, the

larger global network of contemporary Indigenous art presents itself. Not only through the artworks that act as technology of enchantment (Gell 1998), but through the social relations—local and global—that coalesce around materials that represent the complexity of colonial settler relations and the lived reality of colonisation today by Indigenous Peoples.

Conclusion

Looking at the materials used in contemporary art opens up the aperture of the len anthropology has in relation to art to see the larger complexes and world system of contemporary art through materials. In doing so, "what people *do*" to woollen blankets is culturally specific, yet cross-culturally relevant. Through the aforementioned works what becomes visible is that woollen blankets act as carriers of ideas, lineage, and narratives of colonialism, identity, location, as well as nationalism—material culture is then what Donna Haraway would argue a "modest witness" (Haraway 1997), or what Christine J. Kay calls "vulnerable objects" (Kay 1997: 5), and what Judy Attfield's refers to as "wild things" (Attfield 2000). The powerful visual and material aesthetic of the woollen blanket translated in varied iterations of artworks has captured here the trans-cultural scope of this investigation. The woollen blanket has been consistently used by contemporary artists—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—to communicate their various responses to history and contemporary global struggles with and against colonialism as a lived experience (past and present). The physical and qualitative (metaphoric) properties of woollen blankets are technologies of enchantment for artists where their imaginative transformations can

know no limit. A woollen blanket then becomes a material technology mobilised and transformed by artists into new artistic technologies of enchantment (Gell 1998) that captivates further cultural imaginings and shared experiences when moved within local and global art worlds.

CHAPTER 2

THE BLANKET IN CRAFT
CASE STUDY:
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

"I know this stuff!"
—anonymous market-goer, Aoetaroa New Zealand (2012)—

Locality—From Art to Craft

This chapter focuses on the second of three types of creative transformative human actions upon woollen blankets by charting out the movement of woollen blankets within the system of contemporary craft markets and fairs across the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the woollen blanket has been found in use beyond the site-specific works, sculptures, wall pieces, performance based works, and paintings, as we saw in Chapter One. In some instances, various makers have created distinct bodies of work that they sell as items at craft markets *and* exhibit in art galleries.[59] But this chapter looks specifically at how woollen blankets feature in the work of makers within contemporary craft markets. The goal of this chapter is to present how woollen blankets in contemporary craft in Aotearoa New Zealand are used by makers to express a range of issues from nationalism, economics, and historical specificity around identity, the role of recycling in resurgent craft

[59] In the instances where makers create both art items and craft items from blankets, all of their works will be discussed in this chapter to show the scope of their overall creative actions.

practices, and how materials participate in articulating a local aesthetic.[60] This movement is, again, systematically presented through a materials approach to understanding how *things* factor into the creation and articulation of cultural heritage.

Enchantment in Craft Markets

One Saturday morning just before noon, I was standing off to the side of the main entrance to a local craft market in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand observing the flow and movement of people around the carefully curated craft stalls that framed the inside of a small community hall. As I sketched the floor plan in my notebook, paying particular attention to the type of items sold from handmade soaps, to creatively packaged baked good, as well as other stalls featuring decorative home goods and clothes for children, I heard a woman's voice to my left rather jubilantly announce: "I know this stuff!" (2011).[61] Glancing over to see who made this statement and to whom, I saw a woman likely in her early to mid-forties standing alone and smiling as she held a rather modest sized pink and cream plaid-coloured cushion made from a woollen blanket in her arms. From what I could tell, she was not sharing her declarative statement of joy and knowing to anyone in particular. Not even the seller whose stall she was standing at. I watched her as she held this cushion close to her

[60] Many of the works presented in this chapter could have also been included in Chapter One. However, their inclusion this chapter is critical to extending the discussion of aesthetic transformations to note where they exist along the contemporary art-craft continuum to foreground local aesthetics through textiles materials.

[61] Amazingly, during an interview with artist Tracey Williams (2012) whose work is presented in Chapter One, when she was talking about her work at the Tauranga Art Gallery she recalled a similar relationship to woollen blankets by the women who assisted her through the sewing circle to stitch the hull of the ship. She notes "People went and they would touch the work and it spoke to them on a level like 'Oh I know this stuff….I made this stuff'. It was like a lot of women of a much older generation […] there was a lot of resonance for the work […]."

body with her left arm, and with a small smile on her face, she used her right hand to move across top of the cushion where eventually her fingers followed the outline shape of a fantail bird emblazoned on the cushion with a synthetic pink vinyl fabric (similar to FIGURE 35).

The reaction of this woman and her experience of knowing a material is a rich example of the many intimate sensory moments with craftworks made from woollen blankets that I observed throughout my fieldwork. Such experiences often led to conversations and interviews where the role materials play in evoking various regimes of knowledge—personal and national—were expressed through touch, site, and memory. How then does material 'stuff' factor into modalities of understanding, knowing, and articulating cultural heritage in Aotearoa New Zealand through the materials that move through the "social community of craft" (Stevens 2011: 53)?

FIGURE 35. **Hayley Lowe Designs. 2011.** Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

This 'stuff', of course, is the woollen blankets that have been creatively transformed into new forms for sale at contemporary craft markets and fairs. As we saw in Chapter One, new forms (*things*, objects, works of art) made from woollen blankets have become increasingly popular and visible today in not only art galleries

and museums but in contemporary craft markets across Aotearoa New Zealand within the last seven years. During fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand I purposefully adopted Nicholas Thomas's ideas to look at exhibitions as a mode of accessing history and issues of national identity. In this mapping of spaces to major art centres, art collections, regional galleries, and galleries, I also attended local and regional craft and art markets (sample in FIGURE 36), auction houses, and scheduled interviews with artists and craftspeople based at various locales across the North Island.

FIGURE 36. Devonport Craft Market. 2011.
Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

There is something very particular about woollen blankets in art and craft in Aotearoa New Zealand apart from their manufacture as we see throughout this chapter. Again, returning to Nicholas Thomas, he argues that, "[i]n Aotearoa New Zealand, art works and exhibitions [to this I would add craft fairs and markets] are peculiarly important to the imagining of the nation's history and the future that should

follow from it […]."[62] This future, however, had been dependent upon a greater understanding and reconciliation with the colonial history of Aotearoa New Zealand.[63]

Geographically this chapter focuses upon the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand (MAP 3 in Chapter One). Situated deep within the South Pacific, this relatively small island nation boasts a current (2014) national population of approximately 4.5 million residents.[64] Prior to European contact in the eighteenth century, Māori were the original inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand. After contact, large and small European settlement communities began to take root with the insurgence of immigrant populations from Britain. In this discussion, these people and their descendants are referred to as European-New Zealanders as opposed to the more colloquial name of Pākehā (unless, this Māori language term is used by a maker in the course of discussing their work).[65] Today the diversity of the national population is beyond European-New Zealanders and Māori populations and includes citizens and residents from immigrant populations from across the South Pacific. Some countries include, but are not limited to: Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, India, China, Japan, Australia, and Tasmania. The immigrant demographic also includes representation from other

[62] Nicholas Thomas presents a concise summary of "bicultural" issues that took root in academia in the 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand (Thomas 2006: 475). More recently, however, museum and heritage studies scholar Conal McCarthy poignantly and exhaustively traces out this debate through the context of museums in Aoteaora New Zealand while drawing attention to contemporary art in varied contexts (McCarthy 2011). Add to this list Haidy Geismer's recent work in *Treasured Possessions* for the most sensitive activation of current issues on the biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand (Geismar 2013).

[63] One of the founding Directors of Art+Object Auction House (est. 2007, Auckland), James Parkinson, noted to me, "a lot of woollen blankets have been discarded because textiles, sadly, are not as valued by collectors."

[64] This statistic is derived from the 2006 national census of Aotearoa New Zealand. New results will be posted in August 2014 that emerges from the census conducted in 2013.

[65] Haidy Geismer offers up, in my mind, one of the more sensitive and articulate definitions of Pakeha.

countries with colonial histories such South Africa, Canada, Britain, the United States, and Germany. Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the many former colonial settler states. Currently the nation is governed and participates on a global scale under the auspices or framework of the Commonwealth, with an appointed Governor General acting as a representative to the Queen of England, who acts as a head of state (Williams 2006; McCarthy Personal Communication 2014). The settler colonial history of this island nation has, in its short history, been fraught with tension, bloodshed, and misinterpretations of treaty agreements over land and sovereignty. The main treaty signed in 1840 between Māori chiefs and the Crown is known as the Treaty of Waitangi (Salmond 1997; Orange 1989; Durie 2005). Prior to this treaty, all lands (including foreshore and seabed) were governed by Māori *iwi* (tribes) across all three islands (North Island, South Island, and Stewart Island, see MAP 3 in Chapter One). After the treaty, where items such as woollen blankets and muskets were traded for land, the woollen blanket enters into the conversation in this thesis by having a strong presence in Aotearoa New Zealand's contested national identities and land claims.

History of the Woollen Blanket in Aotearoa New Zealand

Historically in Aotearoa New Zealand it was, for lack of a better qualifier, the expansionist vision of Captain James Cook whose mission aboard the *HM Endeavour* in 1779 that could have been one of the first instances when British manufactured woollen blankets were first gifted or traded with Māori communities. After Cook's first explorative mission, that followed the travels of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, it was ultimately the South Pacific Trading Company that played a vital role in moving woollen blankets from England into Aotearoa New Zealand. A century after Cook's first

voyage, as documented in *The Authentic and Genuine History of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi* (1890), woollen blankets are noted in the attire of "principle Native [Māori] chiefs of several tribes" (Colenso 1890:15) at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Colenso notes that:

> [S]ome [are] clothed with dogskin mats made of alternate longitudinal stripes of black and white hair; others habited in splendid-looking new woollen cloaks of foreign manufacture, of crimson, blue, brown, and plain, and indeed, of every shade of striking colour […] while some were dressed in plain European and some in common Native dresses (15).

The appearance of woollen blankets at this monumental event in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand points to the value of the woollen blanket as a new material in trade and treaty relations. Around this same time, numerous visual representations from the colonial trade era discretely document the subtle movement of woollen blankets into different landscapes and cultures—physically and imaginatively (FIGURES 37 and 38).

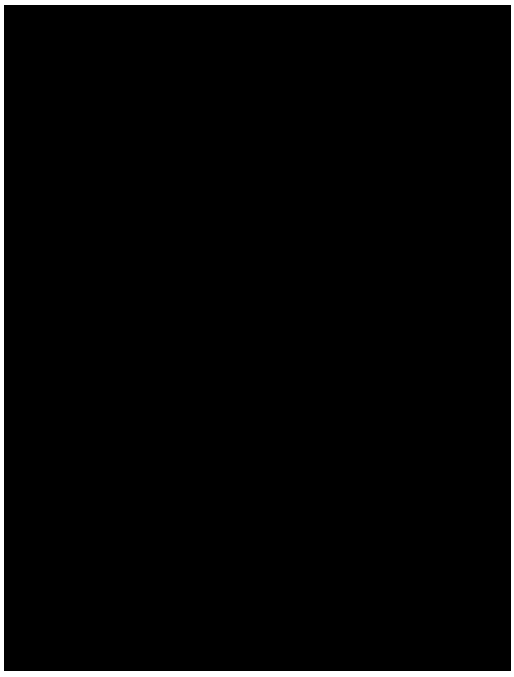

FIGURE 37. George Angus. *Mungakahu, Chief of Mptupo and his wife, Ko Mari. 1847.*
From: Alexander Turnbull Library

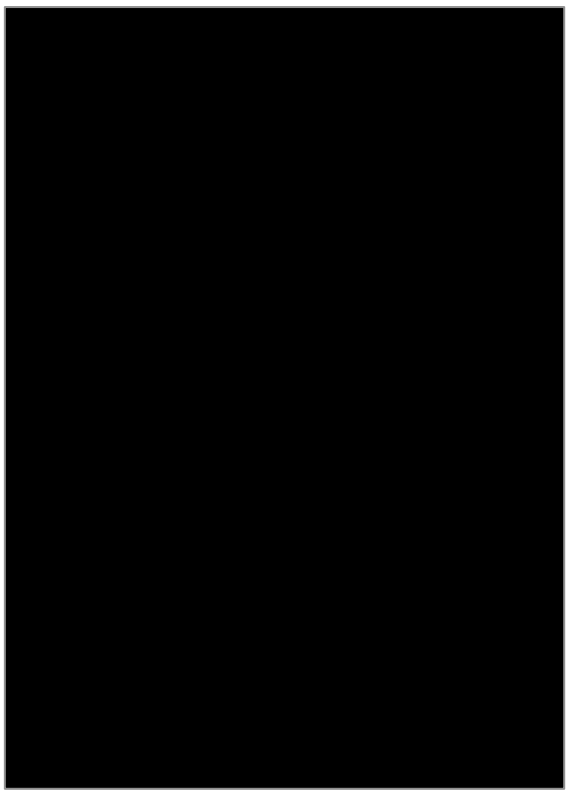

FIGURE 38. C.I Hutchinson. *Ko Wiremu, wearing Kakahu.* 1848.
Sketchbook GNZMS 348 / 995.0152 W(2)
From: Sir George Grey Collection (Auckland City Archives, Aotearoa New Zealand)

In Aoteaora New Zealand, artists aboard ships captained by James Cook (1728-1879) rendered similar scenes of men and women wrapped in woollen blankets. As introduced at the outset of this thesis, the work of William Strutt (1825-1915) (FIGURE 4), Gottfried Lindauer (1839-1926), and Charles Frederick Goldie (1870–1947) (FIGURE 5) painted varied portraits with Māori men and women wrapped in plaid woollen blankets that are now treasured items in national art and archive collections. These representations of Indigenous individuals wrapped in blankets persisted beyond the canvas throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are well-evidenced in ethnographic and studio photography.

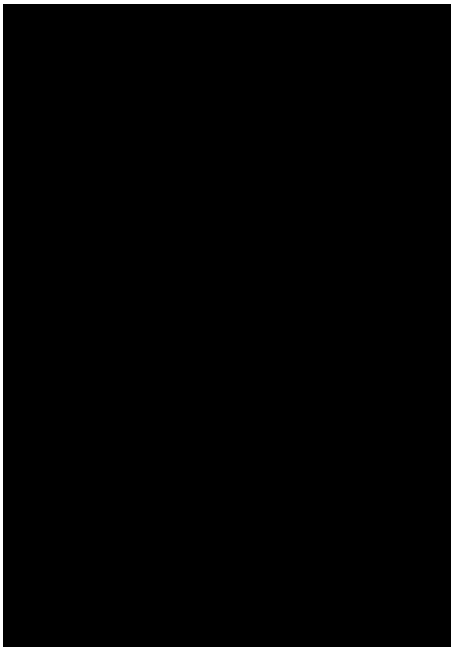

FIGURE 39. Unknown Photographer. *The Beloved Pipe*. No Date
From: Sir George Gray Collection, Auckland City Archives. 95.015w (3)

In the several examples from colonial visual culture housed in archives and art collections, the woollen blanket has been captured, and to a certain extent romanticised, in trade interactions staged in sublime landscapes between European traders and Indigenous groups. Or alternatively used to portray Indigenous peoples as wrapped up in European material culture (FIGURE 39).

Shortly after the introduction of blankets and muskets to Aotearoa New Zealand, many European settler communities were founded. With them came a demand for subsistence and the familiarity of the woollen mills appears to have immigrated as well. Mills were set up across both the North and South islands. These mills were modelled on Europe's post-Industrial Revolution technologies that offered mechanised manufacture to replace the previous hand- and steam-powered looms that launched the blanket making industry in England and France. By the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, the dynamic system of supply and demand that Adam Smith devoted much of his life to understanding was visible in the blanket-making industry not only in England but also in Aotearoa New Zealand. Consequently, the import of wool to England from various settler colonies across the British Empire, for example, from India to Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere in the British Isles, was well underway.[66] Eventually, as I understand it, Aotearoa New Zealand, was moving away from the export of wool for the British blanket industry in order to ensure they were able to produce enough wool to manufacture the highly coveted woollen blankets at their own mills for a budding commercial market in Aotearoa New Zealand. [67]

One of the first mills established was the New Zealand Woollen Manufacturing Company founded in 1887 and renamed as Onehunga Woollen Mills in 1904. This mill was situated in one of the main suburbs of the Auckland isthmus. Not even thirty years after the opening of some of the first mills like Onehunga, several marketing campaigns captured the blanket not as was commonly done in the stereotyped portraits of Māori men and women, but rather as a luxury good to be consumed for

[66] In archival documents in Oxfordshire (UK) there are photographic images of wool wagons fording rivers across the South Island to be bailed and shipped back to England for the blanket making industry there. Oxfordshire Regional Archives B1/2/P6/10. In addition to this the New Zealand Wool Board was established in 1921, and after 1944 the Wool Industry Act greatly affected the import and export of raw wool.

[67] Smith, 1776; MacKay 1935: 45-49; Rex 1958: 33. Douglas MacKay addresses the history of the blanket examined from the perspective of the Hudson's Bay Company. He comments that "'Point' blankets are made from selected wools from England, Wales, New Zealand and India, each bringing a definite quality which contributes to the water resistance, the warmth, the softness, and the strength of the final article" ("Blanket Coverage," *The Beaver*, June 1935: 45-49). This summary on wool corresponds with a letter dated 4 July 1923 from C.V. Sale to C.W. Veysey (General Manager, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg), however, it is noted that "Australia is not one of the sources from which the particular type of wool used in these blankets originated" (p.1). Kay Rex also notes in her article, "The Weavers of Witney," that South America and South Africa also supplied wool used in the blankets (*Canadian Geographical Journal*, July 1958: 33) (McDonald 2006).

the home and travel. I include these examples as a transition to talking specifically about the blanket manufacturing industry in Aotearoa New Zealand.

While these mills no longer exist today, the woollen blankets produced from many mills continue to be some of the most popular and coveted palid-patterned blankets transformed into craft and art items. However, as designer Sue MacMillan (whose blanket cushions are discussed later in this chapter) indicated to me, through her work with woollen blankets it has become apparent that "different mills had different qualities." Historically mills such as Petone Woollen Mills, Kaiapoi, Cantebury, Mosgiel, Omaru, and Robinswurl are just a few examples of key mills that supported the settler communities across both the North and South Islands (Butterworth 1988). See APPENDIX 6 for archival documents that visualise aspects of the woollen blanket industry in Aotearoa New Zealand).

FIGURE 40. Kaiapoi Petone Group Textile Ltd. c.1960.
Kaiapoi, the softest warmest blankets in the world.
Made in New Zealand by KPG, Kaiapoi Petone Group Textiles Ltd.
Printed by Christchurch Press Co.
From: Alexander Turnbull Library [Eph-E-WOOL-1960s-01]

FIGURE 41. New Zealand Railways, Publicity Branch. c. 1920s.
The Mosgiel Rug: "the traveller's friend".
Mosgiel suitings | Mosgiel blankets | Mosgiel knitted underwear
Sold at all best shops.
From: Alexander Turnbull Library [NON-ATL-012]

According to historian Heather Nicholson in *The Loving Stitch: A history of knitting and spinning in New Zealand*, "textile manufacture began in New Zealand as a cottage industry" (Nicholson 1998: 178). From this cottage industry emerged some of Aotearoa New Zealand's original mills in the South Island. Between 1871 and 1873, Mosegiel, known as New Zealand's first woollen mill, and Kiakorai mills were established in the Otago region of the South Island (Nicholson 1998: 179).[68, 69] Further historical research by Te Ara (New Zealand's Encyclopedia) notes that: "[t]hese [mills] were followed by mills in Kaiapoi (1879), Roslyn (1879), Ōamaru (1881) and Ashburton (1885). The North Island followed with mills in Onehunga, Napier, Wanganui and Petone."[70]

The main products from Aotearoa New Zealand woollen mills' were blankets, tweed fabrics, flannels, serges and worsteds, and knitting yarn (FIGURES 40 and 41).[71] The majority of these fabrics and textiles remained for consumption and circulation within Aotearoa New Zealand, rather than produced specifically for export.[72]

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[68] Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/3

[69] "Before setting up the Mosgiel Woollen Company, New Zealand's first woollen mill, Arthur Burns went to Britain to buy machinery. The mill had coal-fired boilers, carding machines and spinning mules with 650 spindles, four blanket and tweed looms, and machinery for finishing, washing and milling. Burns also hired a Scottish manager and mill hands" (Nicholson 1998).

[70] From Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/3

[71] From Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/3

[72] "During the Second World War the Ashburton mill installed automatic looms and ran three shifts a day. It made more than 724 kilometres of fabric for army clothing – using 427 tonnes of wool – as well as army blankets (grey with a red stripe down the middle), yarn for jerseys, socks and Shetland-blend underclothes. However, profits were cut back by having to pay overtime rates; in one year this came to 80,000 hours among the 300 employees because, in spite of people being 'manpowered' into mills, staff was hard to get." From Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/4

The history of these materials spans generations, too. During a regular research visit to the Devonport Craft Market, for example, I introduced myself to Elizabeth Berge, owner of Zippity Doo Dah Handmade wonders who was selling many items crafted from woollen blankets. Prior to introducing myself I had been studying a small teddy bear on her table made from a grey woollen blanket whose story label noted that he was "hand crafted from a vintage NZ army blanket". As I shared with Elizabeth my interest in blankets for this research project, she replied "oh then you want to talk with me! My great grandfather was involved in the woollen mills in New Zealand." She went on to explain how she inherited many army blankets from her great aunt and uncle and that she was using these blankets now to create her handmade warrior teddy bears that she felt where her creative way of transforming and softening the grey woollen blankets associated with a military or army history.[73] Elizabeth's family history and involvement in the woollen mills is an example of the lived experience with materials and of the inheritance of blankets and the movement of woollen blankets through families.

"The picture of colonial mills that emerges is one of a muted version of their counter parts in the United Kingdom" (McLean 1981: 119).[74] There were so many mills that historian G. J McLean argues in *Spinning Yarns* that by the 1950s, "New Zealand had too many mills for its size" (McLean 1981: 49). Couple this with the increase

[73] The small teddy bear warriors that Elizabeth makes are complex items themselves that represented the placement of cross-cultural symbols. Having studied the meaning of *moko* (facial tattoos) in Māori culture, Elizabeth hand stitches *moko* onto the bears and decorates them with a *hei tiki* figure as a necklace. These teddy bears are one of Elizabeth's most sought after items. She also makes small elephant toys from blankets as well.
[74] Auckland City Archives. NZC1000264858. P44 ASB. October 1968.

import of synthetic fibres, and the decline of mills was imminent within Aotearoa New Zealand.[75]

FIGURE 42. Blanket Labels. 2011.
Selection of blanket labels from woollen mills in Aotearoa New Zealand. *These labels belong to the private collection of Sue McMillian who permitted me to document every label.* Photos by Fiona P. McDonald

As a historical note on the longevity of woollen mills, "[i]n 1980 the Mosgiel Woollen Mill closed after almost 110 years of operation. By 1982 there were only eight mills, controlled by five companies. When import licensing for textiles ended in 1992, mills faced more competition from imported textiles on which the high tariffs were being gradually lowered. By 2000 all of the major mills had closed." The productivity of these woollen mills was remarkable and it has been documented that: "In 1960 there were 18 mills [remained operational] in New Zealand, operated by 16 companies. In 1968 they produced 10,000 tonnes of carpet, weaving, machine- and hand-knitting

[75] In one archival record at the National Archives in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, a letter from an official from Hole Proof Mills Limited to an executive at the Department of Trade and Industry comments that there was great interest by Japanese to purchase blankets as singles, not as pairs. The author of the letter goes on to note: "It is obvious that the pure wool blanket is regarded as a luxury item in Japan and commands a higher price." Further historical research into the export of woollen blankets would prove beneficial.

yarn, 3 million square meters of woven fabric, 223,000 pairs of blankets, and 67,000 rugs. However, the new light-weight easy-care synthetic fabrics that had become available in the 1950s were providing competition for woven woollen fabrics."[76] And by 1968 a key mill, the Korokoroa mills in Lower Hutt valley outside of Wellington (the nation's capitol) closed (FIGURE 42). Currently, historian Warwick Johnstone is researching the history of Petone Woollen mills (also known as the Wellington Woollen Manufacture Company) that operated just outside of Wellington at the foot of the Korokoro hills from or between the years of 1886-1968. "While serges, tweeds and various woollen garments were produced on the plant's clattering looms, the mill's best-known product was its woollen blanket. Tens of thousands of New Zealand household linen cupboards probably still have one or two of the heavy "Petone" blankets. They are trendy again now as an icon of the past with the resurgence of interest in Kiwiana and handcrafts" (Edwards 2013).

Over time, with the increase in importation of synthetic materials and the introduction of the "dunna" or duvet and candlewick bed covers, iconic woollen blankets slowly receded into the cupboard and out of view. But while the woollen blanket was removed from its everyday use, it was not displaced people's memories. It appears that during the transitional period from the woollen blanket to the duvet, approximately the 1950s to the mid-1980s, that those working with woollen blankets today were young children at this time and who remember the woollen blankets on their bed. This group, known more boadly as Gen Xers, are the demographic of people born between 1965-1981 and comprise the group of women I worked with in Aotearoa

[76] From Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/4

New Zealand, as well as the demographic of those, mostly women again, who attended and purchased goods from various types of craft markets. Added to these memories of the personal relationship many artists whom I interviewed and observed are what they call their "own" woollen blanket—referring here to the colour or pattern of the blanket or memory. And since various mills produced wide ranges of plaid-patterns in various colours, it appears that the Gen Xers are the main consumers now working with transforming and transformed woollen blankets into new forms as they play in to the nostalgic power of materials to enhance the marketability of such memories and the popularity of certain patterns.

For example, when I first came to meet maker Hayley Lowe at the Mission Bay Craft Market in Auckland (2011), we were standing close together sheltering ourselves from the wind in her open-air tent where she was selling her art quilts and recycled blanket cushion covers. As we talked, she pointed out the responses of people who came into her stall. Some, so much saying as "I know this stuff", acknowledged, "we had *that* blanket growing up." In other words, many customers it appeared were attracted to a specific blanket pattern or colour and were purchasing cushions, in these instances, as a way of reconnecting with a blanket from their childhood that shared either a plaid-pattern or colour. This action was evident of both the makers and consumers self-conscious actions with and on blankets to evoke a reconnection to the material memories of youth. When I questioned Lowe further about the motives of people purchasing her works, she noted that many purchased cushions in particular to put in their summer/holiday homes. In Aotearoa New Zealand these are iconic holiday homes that are regionally called baches on the North Island and cribs on the South

Island.[77] Lowe was able to share with me that she has found through her sales and experience with buyers of her transformed woollen blankets that there is a "real strong pull" toward the materials in her works that helps with sales. Additionally, Lowe has been privy to the many personal stories people have shared with her about their blanket memories. In this case, as is discussed later, the connection between the materials that handmade craft items offer an opportunity for those purchasing the craft item to connect with the maker. This subsequent exchange marks out one of many instances where the blanket has enchanted an individual and formed a relationship between maker, buyer, and material. This, of course, is Latourian in essence of the subject-object relationship whereby the woollen blanket moves from material *thing* to craft object in relation to the subject or maker.

The Craft Aesthetic: Defining Craft Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Craft has long been a site of investigation for anthropologists in various cultural contexts as a rich arena from which to gain insight into local consumption practices, and the role of craft objects in tourist markets (Phillips 1998; 2002). As Lacy Jane Roberts, an historian of craft notes, "[s]o many types of practices and makers exist who are claiming craft—the terrain is so deeply rich and endlessly shifting—that critical craft discourse is positioned to redefine material and visual culture" (Roberts 2011: 249). And its application within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand provides

[77] Interestingly, during my fieldwork I was able to stay in the summer homes (baches) of several New Zealanders on the North Island. During these visits, I took note that woollen blankets were a staple serviceable home ware. Often, when I asked hosts about the blankets all had stories from being used when someone was ill and remained with them after a hospital visit, to absolutely no recollection of the blankets history in the bach as often these were second or third generation inherited properties.

one such rich example where the localisation of craft through blanket-made items provides a space for critical investigation. With emerging venues for craft as sites for social networks, the definition of what is craft and who makes craft *is* absolutely ever shifting in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to Finn Ferrier in Aotearoa New Zealand, "[t]he role of the maker today is complicated. Traditional trades that were once useful are now specialised and seen as a quaint throwback" (Ferrier 2006: 19). This idea of "throwback" feeds into ideas around nostalgia explored later in this chapter. I turn now to look at how craft and craftworks are understood in the larger discourse of craft.

Craft versus Art Matrix—a discussion

Since Maria Elena Buszek edited *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary* Art (2011), it is clear that the "boundary crossing potential" between art and craft is becoming ever more fluid and traversed (Buszek 2011: 12-13). This fluidity is making the way we understand and define the various regimes of craft more complex when situated next to Glenn Adamson's larger historical work on craft (Adamson 2007; 2010). In Buszek's greater ambition to look at craft as performance rather just as objects, her position is not to engage with the art versus craft debate has thus enabled my study to participate more fully in what she calls the longitudinal breathe of "the craft-art continuum" (Buszek 2011: 24) where focus upon the materials and the importance of the notion of the handmade become paramount to reading local aesthetics. In this instance, I would argue that the use of a textile with a history as complex as the woollen blanket in Aotearoa New Zealand is often what complicates how the objects made from blankets are either art, craft, or both.

Before moving on to addressing the handmade, I want to first point out that within the context of this study of the everyday use of blankets in aesthetic contexts, I apply the term 'craft' to strictly comply with the instances where those who create items call them craft that is made for sale at venues known as craft markets and fairs. As a rebuttal to calling what the makers in Aotearoa New Zealand do as "craft", Adamson might alternatively label those working with woollen blankets in Aotearoa New Zealand who sell their goods at craft markets the "DIY" type of maker—the sort of creative individual that he aligns with ideas around the amateur. But, just as it was not my place to judge the qualities of what makes a work of art a work of art (Thomas 1991; Gell 1998), I therefore allow the makers to self-identify themselves and their work in order to see how materials flow to reveal the larger networks that exist and the social relations that coalesces.

Returning now to the idea of the handmade, it is craft historian Joseph McBrinn, from his work on craft in design in Ireland, who suggests "[t]he handmade became a symbol of continuity, an emblem of stability, and the icon of identity" (McBrinn 2007: 122). Glenn Adamson suggests the value of the handmade quality in craft by arguing that there is "a fascination with handmade 'softness' in form and material" is critical to the valuation of craft in its various forms or regimes of value that Adamson's own work participates in creating (Adamson 2007: 34). The values associated with the handmade evoke a sense of authenticity for many consumers. This is something essential to what is now called the 'maker movement' of present. This movement, while it has been compared to the historic Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris's time in the nineteenth century, stakes its success on the fact that

artisanal products are of high-quality of manufacture, but also on how well makers have networked themselves through sites and market communities such as Facebook, ETSY, FELT.co.nz, and others (The Economist 2014).[78]

Defining Craft and the Handmade in Aotearoa New Zealand

Through this study, my objective was never to define the various classifications of craft *per se*, but rather to show how makers use materials to participate in craft contexts, and specifically how materials participate in creative craft markets—in its various forms—in articulating cultural heritage and the history that is for sale.[79] Nor was my focus to explore the "fetishism of technical virtuosity" (Owen 2011: 84). But just how the materials are used. As Elizabeth Berge, owner of Zippity DooDah Handmade remarked to me about her work with woollen blankets that "you start a trend by using a material, or else you follow the trend someone else has started". As was presented in Chapter One, artists move woollen blankets through the global art world and market, and in doing so create trends that read as phenomenon. Rona Ngahuia Osborne's work has actively participated in this within Aotearoa New Zealand (FIGURES 30 and 31, Chapter One), whereby additional movement by makers in to the

[78] As a brief comment here upon the industrially manufactured and the handmade, Jacques Manquet's ideas are relevant. He writes: "Industrial fabrication does not affect the aesthetic potentialities of objects; they are not disqualified from having an aesthetic value because they are mass-produced. But the technique of production—hand or machine—affects their forms. Handmade objects usually fail to achieve sharpness of lines, symmetry of shapes, regularity of textures, and uniformity in hues and brightness to the same degree that machine-processed objects do. This kind of formal perfection conveys meanings to the beholder other than what the handmade form conveys" (Manquet 1986: 196).

[79] One anonymous gallery volunteer in Wellington, Aotearoa noted to me when looking at a work of art that includes blankets that "art cannot be nostalgic because in order to be credible it needs to be critical of the artists' world". This begs the question for future work to examine how crafts people might be any less critical of their own world then what an artist is doing and who is the judge of this classification.

systems of crafts and craft markets draws out how the self-conscious act of selecting materials for creative transformation can and does foreground the intention of the maker, as well as the social relations that coalesce materials and things in our material world (Gell 1998).

On the macro level of understanding the craft-art continuum in the Antipodes, the work of Grace Cochrane accurately captures the nuances and changes that have affected the current context of craft attitude in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (Cochran 2007), in particular drawing attention to the importance of the design industry. While Chapter One looked at individuals who called their human action upon woollen blankets art, in this chapter the makers call their actions, amongst other things, craft. And one maker in particular makes the same type of cushions from blankets that have equally been regarded as both craft and art, as well as homeware design.

Wellington-based designer and owner of SEAM (www.seam.co.nz), Sue McMillian, operates a thriving business from her independent studio custom built within her home where her main products are decorated woollen blanket cushions (FIGURE 43). At the time we met (2011-2012), she had already produced and sold over 3,500 blanket cushions. Her creative work with blankets is well regarded as high-end home ware design and sold mostly within retail shops in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Her work has been written about widely in various magazines (*Magpie's Nest*, *Your Home & Garden*, *North and South*, *Homestyle*), newspapers (VIVA section of the *New Zealand Herald*, Life and Indulgence sections of the *Dominion Post*), and online from both Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia for her creative works and have

been situated on the craft-art continuum by consumers as design and craft. Meanwhile, McMillian's work has also been exhibited in local art exhibitions. Through her work in collecting blankets for her business McMillian possess a remarkable depth of understanding regarding the age and history of blankets across Aotearoa New Zealand. From this, she has also organised an extensive collection of blanket labels from various different blanket mills around Aotearoa New Zealand. When I met McMillian at the outset of my fieldwork, I was unaware of the importance blanket labels have. Often these labels indicate the city or town where the mill existed. This has become a very important detail as labels are often more valued then the woollen blankets and have been used to increase the prices charged for transformed blankets.[80] There becomes a regional demand for specific blanket labels featuring the town or place name that corresponds to where the consumer plans to place that transformed blanket item.

FIGURE 43. SEAM. 2010
Left: SEAM Studio (photo by Fiona P. McDonald)
Middle: SEAM Cushions (image courtesy Sue McMillan)
Right: SEAM Cushion (image courtesy Sue McMillan)

[80] Sue also shared with me her strategy for shopping for blankets online via Trademe.co.nz. Originally she purchased blankets at local thrift stores ("op shops") but she feels that with the increase in makers working with blankets has made them less readily available or of a good enough quality.

During our first interview McMillian shared with me her history of collecting blankets starting about four years prior (c.2007-2008) and noted that through her collecting of woollen blankets she was not sure what she was going to do with them, but that she "needed the blankets to be working for [her]." The result was her transforming her growing collection of woollen blankets into an original series of signature woollen blanket cushions. McMillian mostly sells her handmade works online or through retail shops therefore many of our conversations tended to focus mostly on the history of blankets, which were wonderfully interspersed as she managed phone orders. McMillian did indicate that she did try to sell once at a market but found it was not for her—she was not comfortable standing behind a table and now prefers to "send it off to a shop and let someone else do that."

In her study, Chochran pays little attention to the materials, but rather acknowledges the desire for an acceptance of craft within the world of art and a prioritisation of the handmade. In her argument, however, the difference between art and craft being that which society wishes more for, to her is "evidence of the unique hand of the maker" (Cochrane 2007: 63). Cochrane goes on to say, "[w]e enjoy emotional attachments to objects made by someone we can identify" (Cochrane 2007: 63). In this case, more focus rests on the response of consumers then the emotional needs of the maker.

This is evidenced in the demand for the handmade in craft markets and fairs across the North Island, and is often one of the criterions a seller must meet in order to be able to sell their work at local craft markets. I attended several such markets in rotation in Aotearoa New Zealand such as Crafternoon Tea, Kraftbomb (identified as

the “edgier” of all the handmade markets), Devonport Craft Market, Craft 2.0, and others (See FIGURE 45 for a sample of market posters and event). Joseph McBrinn’s work on craft offers a very succinct reflection on the idea of the handmade in craft. “The signification of craft evolved as handmade objects became imbued with symbolic meanings of authenticity, tradition, and heritage, and became seen as agents of transformation, changing everyday commodities into signs of modernity” (McBrinn 2008: 122). Therefore the woollen blankets that receded into the wardrobes across Aotearoa New Zealand when the mills shut down and the synthetic duvets emerged, have reemerged through the self-conscious work of makers whose hands transform them and put them back to the forefront at a time when European New Zealanders continually look for objects from within their own frames of reference and experience to articulate an authentic piece of a national heritage.

But being handmade is something that ties together maker and consumer. Added to this is that both the maker and the buyer *know this stuff*. The objects that woollen blankets have been imagined into are remarkable and to varying degrees serve alternative utilitarian functions that reflect the persistence and durability, as well as the material properties of woollen blankets. This list below (in alphabetical order) is a sample of the many items that blankets have been imagined into. Following this is a visual presentation of some of these items in TABLE 4:

- **Baby blankets** (patch worked and quilted)
- **Book covers and notebooks**
- **Children's Clothese**
- **Christmas ornaments** (tree decorations)
- **Clothes Peg Angels**
- **Coats** (short and long in various styles) and vests
- **Coffee-cup sleeves protectors**
- **Coffins**
- **Cushions** (various sizes)
- **Door stops** (weighed)/**Draft blockers**
- **Dresses** (adult)
- **Eyeglass cases**
- **Hot water bottled covers**
- **iPad and Laptop covers & cases**
- **Jewelry cases**
- **Kids tunic dresses**
- **Lamp shades**
- **Ottomans/footstools**
- **Pencil cases**
- **Broaches** (in various shapes, mostly flowers and *Hei Tiki* forms)
- **Bunting** (decorative flags and garland)
- **Pot holders & Oven mitts**
- **Purses** (clutches)
- **Scarves**
- **Sewing Pin Cushions**
- **Tea cosies**
- **Teddy Bears**
- **The "Man Shawl"**
- **Tooth Fairy holders**
- **Toys in various shapes** (*Hei Tiki* [Māori god, or the first born Man in the Māori world], foxes, Scottie dogs, squirrels, elephants, whales, giraffes, robots, mice, matryoshka [Russian stacking] dolls)
- **Wall hangings**
- **Wheat bag** (heating bags)
- **Wristbands and bracelet**

TABLE 4. Visual Archive of Transformed Woollen Blankets in Craft

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	MAKER DETAILS
Baby blankets (patch worked and quilted)		Haley Lowe Designs Seen at: Mission Bay Craft Market (Auckland); Coatesville Market (Coatesville, New Zealand)
Book covers and notebooks		Anni B Handmade Seen at: Crafternoon Tea Market (Kingsland, Auckland, New Zealand); and on Facebook
Broaches		Deborah Bray (of Waiheke Island) Seen at: Buana Sutu Shop (K-Road, Auckland, New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Broaches		Unknown Seen at: Mount Munganui Tourist shop
Bunting (decorative flags and garland)		Plycandy, NZ Seen on: ETSY.com
Christmas ornaments (tree decorations)		Justine Hawksworth Handmande New Zealand Seen at: Titirangi Market; Bounty (Thames, New Zealand)
Christmas ornaments (tree decorations)		Zippity Doh Dah Seen at: Devonport Craft Market (Auckland, New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Christmas ornaments (tree decorations)		Justine Hawksworth Handmade New Zealand Seen at: Bounty (Thames, New Zealand)
Christmas ornaments (tree decorations)		Emma Heath. Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)
Clothes Peg Angels		Huhana & Hatina. and Justine Hawksworth Handmade New Zealand Seen at: Bounty (Thames, New Zealand)

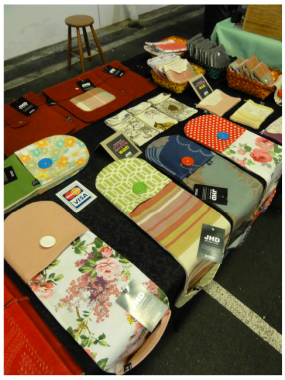
TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Coats (short and long in various styles) and vests	 BLANKET STATEMENT Crowns Clothing capes, $260 Capes: they're not just for little girls being chased by big bad wolves any more. Featuring a generous hood, luxurious satin lining and handy armhole slits, this is winterwear that achieves that rare fashion combination of style and comfort. Each handcrafted piece is one-of-a-kind, made from 100 percent vintage New Zealand blankets. Five snug designs are currently available, with more to come. @www.crownsclothing.blogspot.com 26 / IDEALOG.CO.NZ	Crowns Clothing Image courtesy designer and Idealog Magazine http://www.idealog.co.nz/ (2011)
Coats (short and long in various styles) and vests		Jo Keith. Seen at: Eye Spy Gallery (Waipu, New Zealand)
Coffee-cup sleeve protectors	 SAVE THE PLANET Home made cozys with recycled glass $9 with 1st coffee free 50c off every coffee from Pizza	Unknown (Image courtesy Margot Edwards, New Zealand)
Coffins		Natural Legacy Coffins Seen online: http://www.naturallegacy.co.uk/natural-legacy-introduced-in-inverness/

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Cushions (various sizes)		SEAM (by Sue McMillian) Seen at: various places including her studio/home, various shops, and online
Cushions (various sizes)	 	Coulter & Coulter. Seen on: Facebook
Cushions (various sizes)		Kristi Stock Studio www.studio.k.jewelery.felt.co.nz Seen at: Habitat (Hahei, New Zealand)
Cushions (various sizes)		Haley Lowe Designs. Seen at: Mission Bay Craft Market (Auckland); Coatesville Market (New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Cushions (various sizes)		Serena Hay Seen at: Art Depot (Devonport, Auckland, New Zealand)
Door stops (weighed)		Delicious Door Stops by Firecracker Seen at: Felt.co.nz as part of the fundraising drive for the Christchurch Earthquake Fund (NZ)
Dresses (adult)		Lucy V. NZ Seen at: Coatesville Market (Coatesville, New Zealand)
Eyeglass cases		Julie Huyser Design Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Hot water bottled covers		Zippity Doh Dah (Elizabeth) Seen at: Crafternoon Tea Market (Kingsland, Auckland, New Zealand)
Hot water bottled covers		Katherine Morrison Seen at: Minerva Bookstore (Wellington, New Zealand)
iPad and Laptop covers and cases		Zippity Doh Dah (Elizabeth) Seen at: Crafternoon Tea Market (Kingsland, Auckland, New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Jewelry cases		Julie Huyser Design Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)
Kids tunic dresses	 	Oh For Crafts Sake! Seen at: Crafternoon Tea Market and on Facebook (Kingsland, Auckland, New Zealand)
Lamp shades		Odd One Out (Nikki Gribble) Seen at: Devonport Craft Market (Auckland. New Zealand)
Ottomans/footstools		Jo Pearson (Accessories & Home wares) Seen at furniture shop in Whakatane (New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Pot holders and Oven mitts		Julie Huyser Design Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)
Purses (clutches)		Jo Keith. Seen at: Eye Spy Gallery (Waipu, New Zealand)
Purses (clutches)		Angie Cairncross. Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)
Scarves		Monkejj NZ Seen on: Facebook

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Sewing Pin Cushions		Unknown Maker. Seen at: Bounty (Thames, NZ)
Tea cozies		Unknown Maker. Seen at: Bounty (Thames, NZ)
Tea cozies		Rosemary McLeod. Seen at: Minerva Bookshop (Wellington, New Zealand)
Tea cozies		People's Puppies Seen on: Facebook

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Teddy Bears		Zippity Doh Dah Seen at: Devonport Craft Market and Kraftbomb Market (Auckland, New Zealand)
The "Man Shawl"		Fat Spatula. Seen at: http://felt.co.nz/listing/37827/The-Man-Shawl (2013)
Toys		Cuddlewick Wild Things Seen at: Bounty (Thames, NZ)
Toys		Maud+Mary Jane. Handmade. Original. Seen at: Coatesville Market (Coatesville, New Zealand)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Toys		Zippity Doh Dah, NZ Seen at: Devonport Craft Market (Auckland, New Zealand)
Toys		Unknown Maker. Seen at: Bounty (Thames, New Zealand)
Toys		Emma Heath. Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)
Wall Hangings		Unknown Maker. Seen at: Bounty (Thames, NZ)

TRANSFORMATION	IMAGE	Maker Details
Wheat bag (heating bags)		Artemis Seen at: Twin Set Shop (Northland, New Zealand)
Wristbands and bracelet		Julie Huyser Design Seen at: Frankitz Market (Wellington, New Zealand)

The process of transformation to the aforementioned items presented also includes the acquisition of the woollen blanket by the maker. As noted earlier, blankets were often abandoned to the back of wardrobes as a deaccessioned household item, and sometimes donated to makers by family and friends wanting to free up storage space; or they were acquired from secondhand thrift shops for bargain price. Every maker I met, interviewed, and conversed with (formally or informally) always indicated the prices they were willing to pay for the blanket—and the price limits were consistently based on the rarity of certain labels or patterns that will in turn fetch higher prices for their works. These experiences of acquiring woollen blankets are one of the many stories that maker shared with me, and it was also a factor that contributed to any sense of competition in the economic valuation of the craft items by the maker.

When observing blankets become wall hangings, toys, and purses I also took note of the costs of many of these items. On average the cushions ranged in prices from $15-$150 New Zealand Dollars (NZD), while smaller items like purses were often priced between $10-$25 NZD. Items such as toys and teddy bears ranged between $20-$50 NZD, and small tree ornaments were around $5-15 NZD. Walking through handmade craft markets was continually an explorative mission in learning new forms and meeting new makers.

In documenting the various forms woollen blankets have been transformed into within the context of craft, I came to learn more about the makers' larger cosmological frames and the complex social networks that existed around the materials for sale in craft markets. Additionally, being present to observe the sale of blanket-made items often created additional depth to understanding the intimate encounter of how the transformation of materials is part of the consumption process. A process where the maker was the magician of turning the blanket into a technology of enchantment that allowed people to be mystified with nostalgia.

The Recycling Aesthetic in Aotearoa New Zealand

While I speak about transformation as a process carried out by creative human action upon woollen blankets from a critical anthropological perspective to study the hot water bottle covers and cushions just presented, the makers and craftspeople in Aotearoa New Zealand who undertake changing the woollen blanket into a craft item have called their processes otherwise. In fact, a distinct language around the creative use of woollen blankets has emerged in recent years. During my fieldwork those who

transform blankets often called themselves “blanketers” (noun), and their transformative act, a verb, referred to as “blanketing”. In linguistics changing a noun into a verb without adding anything is called conversion or zero-affixation. For example, the noun "swing" becomes the verb "to swing" or the noun "butter" becomes the verb "to butter". In this case, the noun, “blanket”, has become the verb "to blanket". Extending from this verb by adding the derivational suffix “-er” to blanket makes the individual who performs the verb (i.e. to farm and then farmer, to dance and then dancer) the “blanketer”.[81] And when a language emerges around a specific cultural form, the significance of the language often indicates a relationship to the heritage of those who are “blanketing”. We return to the role of language around the blanket again in Chapter Three.

In working with many people whose creative work falls along the craft-art continuum discussed earlier, most notably many makers reference their creative transformative actions on blankets through the application of “ [t]he prefix ‘re’”. As Arnd Schneider suggests, the “re” is something that “recalls a central maxim of artistic undertaking in contemporary art” (Schneider 2007: 142). However, in the craft-art continuum “re” has had more resonance in the context of contemporary craft relating to materials with histories.

The “re” prefix draws attention to the centrality of the discourse of recycling to foreground transformative acts upon materials often with a moral underpinning. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the ‘recycled aesthetic’ is very localised and has been used in communicating a national identity at times (Coote 2004: 24). When I

[81] My sincere gratitude to linguistic anthropologist Christine Schreyer (University of British Columbia—Okanagan) who worked closely with me to understand language formation around woollen blankets.

questioned makers in Aotearoa New Zealand about how they identified the process of turning woollen blankets into a new *thing* or object, most called their process either "upcycling" or "recycling" or "blanketing". Of course Jeremy Coote (*et al.*) notes, "[r]ecycling has become a marked, moral issue" today (Coote *et al.* 2000: 30). But the application of considering recycling as part of the transformation process of woollen blankets was often not entangled with environmental issues at all, but was more linked to the female makers self-identifying with a history of subsistence that more than one woman clearly saw as being in line with their "thrifty" and "creative ancestors". Often these are the female ancestors who settled in Aotearoa in the late-nineteenth century and set up the weaving mills. Ele Carpenter suggests, within 'maker culture' there is an increase in the "innovative ways to use, reuse and recycle the technologies and materials that we already have from wood to textiles to electronics and digital devices" (Carpenter 2011: 51). Ruth Singer whose own work focuses on eco-craft even suggests that woollen blankets are an ideal material to "re-use in craft" (Singer 2010: 33, 34, 41).

This brings the use of woollen blankets directly into taking up Corrine A. Kratz's central work on recyclia whereby she notes that "*rethink remember reduce recycle reuse refill reinvest rethink remember reduce* recycle…These re-'s conjure up some musings about the way creatively reused materials have been featured recently in a variety of" contexts, while she points specifically to art contexts, in this current discussion creative contexts is more accurate (Kratz 1995: 1). In the craft milieu of Aotearoa New Zealand, terms, concepts, and actions like the ones below in TABLE 5 (in

alphabetical order) were used consistently, interchangeably, and assertively used by makers:

TABLE 5. Language of Aesthetic Transformations

LANGUAGE OF AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATIONS
Adapted
Re-appropriated
Re-circulated
Re-constituted
Re-loved
Re-made
Re-purposed
Re-used
Re-worked
Recovered
Remembered
Renewed
Re-owned
Repaired
Restored
Retro-activated
Revived
Saving
Tinkered
Upcycled

These descriptors in TABLE 5 capture the various 'regenerative' acts upon woollen blankets, and foreground the use of language in articulating a salvage mentality towards materials known more colloquially as reflecting a "waste not" attitude. This language directs attention back to the importance of transformation as a process critical to the movement of materials in our material world. In most studios I visited, small scraps left over from larger projects were never categorised as waste, and a sentiment of "everything must be used in the end" was central.[82] They were

[82] It was also indicated to me by several makers whose sole transformed items were cushions, that on average a single standard blanket without any satins, holes, or other issues they did

often transformed into the stuffing for pincushions made from blankets, as well as the small decorative tree ornaments sold during the festive holiday at markets leading up to and through December.

Jeremy Coote, Chris Morton, and Julia Nicholson in their curatorial text for *Transformations: The Art of Recycling* (2000) are correct to point out that recycling is a 'complex' subject; "[w]hat we might start off by thinking of as an ecological issue turns out to have economic, political, religious, technical, symbolic, and aesthetic aspects" (Coote 2000: 39). There is often a moralistic value associate with the act of recycling, as well as a practical economic role that recycling offers to makers. Curator Helen Kedgley in Aotearoa New Zealand observed during her work with artists for her exhibition entitled, *Thrift: The Art of Making* Do (2009), that "[a]s the global financial crisis worsens and people try to live and work in more sustainable ways, the lessons of the 'do-it—yourself' generations seem more pertinent then ever" (Kedgley 2009: 1). The economic and cultural currency that recycling offers to creative individuals is plentiful. Additionally, there are specific symbolic and aesthetic aspects derived from recycling as a creative human action in craft; it has been noted that recycling attitudes have at times also allowed makers to employ a degree of irony in the items they make. Kratz suggest that *recyclia* is the best way to capture the process, as well as the end product (Kratz 1995: 7). She notes, "[t]he word (pronounced ree-sick'-lee-uh) was coined by Donna Klumpp Pido in the mid-1980s"(7), that it "begs for a clear eye to multiple aesthetics and context, as well as our own ironic enjoyment. Remember and recognize the circumstances as well as the ingenuity. *Rethink remember recognize*

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not want to incorporate into their would could quite possibly make either six or eight standard cushions.

through recyclica" is what allows me to draw out the specific localised aesthetic of craft through the "end products" made from woollen blankets (Kratz 1995: 12). Central, however is observing how irony features.

As Glen Adamson notes about irony, it is "an expressive part of [crafters] attitude" where they "play mix-and-match" with various aspects of cultural heritage (cf. Stevens 2011: 56). This mix-and-match of cultural heritage enables the wooollen blankets to be positioned next to signs and symbols that have, through historical repetition in arts, craft, tourism markets, national propaganda, and the education system, been situated as markers of cultural and national identity (Womac 2005). The blanket being one such symbol. Other images and texts placed on blankets are noted in TABLE 6:

TABLE 6. Visual Symbols and Text Appliqued on Woollen Blankets

SUMMARY OF VISUAL SYMBOLS	
Birds (specifically, huia, fantails, kiwi birds, Crown Lynn swan)	Deer (profile of heads with antlers)
Anchors	Lady Bugs (aka. Lady Bird)
Traffic sign (Speed limits & stop signs)	*Hei Tiki* (Māori god believed to be the first man/first born in the Māori world)
Profiles of the Queen of England (from the 20cent coin)	Boats
Red Cross Logo	Skulls
Cats	Dogs
Sea Creatures: Lobsters, Octopus, Sharks	Fox
Hearts	*Marae* (Māori meeting house)

SAMPLE TEXT	
Aroha (love)	Place Names (for example: Hahei, Wellington, Newtown, Aotearoa, Wharewaka, etc)
BE BRAVE	*Kia Ora* (be well, hello, thank you)

For example, McMillian's work discussed earlier in this chapter also participates in this "mix-and-match" irony with blankets where she clarified for me that it allows her to "get so much joy from them". She personally aims for a "kind of play on things" such as the Scottie dog vinyl cutout on a tartan blanket.[83] She wanted "iconic things" on her cushions "with a twist" that specifically reached her customers in Aotearoa New Zealand without participating in the placement of traditional images she associates with Kiwiana—*Hei Tiki* figures and native birds from Aotearoa New Zealand. Since the first blanket cushion she made (around 2008), she notes: "what I was trying to do was associate [images] with what the blankets were used for." She also added that in the first instance "I'd put a rabbit on there because you'd use a blanket when you went rabbit hunting in the South Island."

Irony becomes Nostalgia and Memory—woollen blankets as kitsch, vintage, & chic

"Craft can easily become a vehicle of nostalgia, whose primary purpose is not just to remind us of what we have lost, but thereby to imply that we are diminished in our very humanity" (Charney 2011: 16). Reaching back to Chapter One and the artwork of Katherine Morrison who quilts Petone woollen blankets noted that "[b]lankets are part of my heritage […] They evoke nostalgia, frugality, austerity[,] and comfort too" (Kedgley 2009: 3). During my interviews and studio visits with makers and collectors of woollen blankets across the North Island, some of the richest insight into how makers respond to the memories—their own and their customers—in woollen blankets swiftly surfaced and pointed to sentiments around nostalgia and heritage. According to Jo

[83] Sue McMillian also noted that the use of vinyl for her cutouts was for practical reasons. If she were to use felt, after two weeks of wear of a cushion on a couch it would start to pill. So she chose to use vinyl that she hand stitches onto the cushions.

Keith, designer and owner of Eye Spy Gallery in Waipu in the Northland area of the North Island, the blankets for her and those who purchase her art and design wear acknowledge that no matter what form they become, woollen blankets are part of something nostalgic, and for her "nostalgia is what is part of Kiwi identity." Or as Sharon Mox, founder of the craft label Dinky Bits says, for her using blankets is "part of a Kiwiana movement. […] We in New Zealand are slower to get working with our history". And this history is, as we saw earlier, complicated and fraught with colonial injustices.

Yet, this idea of nostalgia and identity returns us to the lady in the market declaring "I know this stuff" and the argument one crafter, Hayley Lowe, pointed out to me—about people identifying certain patterns as "my blanket". However, for others it was simply their claim that "I'm Kiwi and these blankets are a reminder of good memories … they are about comfort" (anonymous market goer, April 2012). After acquiring a large quantity of blankets from her husband's aunt, Lowe resisted having them as they become "fusty" and was not eager to have them around the house. But then she started "hacking them up", something her husband was not pleased with, as these were blankets he grew up knowing. But she started to transform them into cushions and artwork blankets. This idea of nostalgia is evident in Lowe's work, and something she is well aware by sharing with me stories about various emotional attachments to blankets she has heard in response to her cushions. However, Lowe also uses the woollen blanket to articulate her own memories and family stories.

One of the items made from woollen blankets by Lowe are her artwork blankets that she sells at craft markets called *whakapapa* (genealogy) blankets. For

her, “each of these blankets is part of my biography” and they are also part of her political response. “There is a bit of protest in my blankets but people don’t often realise this. It’s about Māori land claims.” The additional meaning of *whakapapa* (genealogy) in relation to the woollen blankets, is that Lowe notes that they have people in them—their “skin cells and there memories are woven into them.” Relevant here is Joanne Turney’s argument that “[c]raft, like narrative, cannot be understood as static, as in the making of each piece and with each telling of a story, time challenges and transforms, offers reflection and reappraisal, potentially adding to and enhancing both. From this perspective it is possible to see the ways in which events, issues and aspects of daily life are built into craftwork and as such the process of making becomes as significant as the made object, marking time and representing life narratives” (Turney 2009: 137).

Drawing upon her history of growing up in the Taranaki region of Aotearoa New Zealand (see MAP 3 in Chapter One), Lowe translates memories onto the blankets. Here, again Ingold’s point of “surfaces of continual interachange” (Ingold 2013). It saddens Lowe, however, when people do not enquire about the meaning of the iconography and symbols she uses. She places churches on her blankets in reference to the missionary churches that were dotted around the country. She conveyed to me that she has no issue with the church by including it, but that she places them in black and red as it saddens her to know what their colonial and spiritual ideologies did to forbid celebrating the Māori gods her father’s family honoured.

The complexity of people’s relationships with woollen blankets plays out in the craft markets where makers sell and exhibit, and create spaces for others to

participate with the nostalgic dimensions of woollen blankets as central to heritage production and circulation (Ronström 2008).

Networks of Encounter (Spaces of Production, Distribution, and Consumption)

The craft market or craft fair is one of the most discerning social spaces as it is "the ground of cultural creativity" (Smader et al 1997: 3) and circulation of cultural heritage articulated through craft items. The craft market is truly a rich social context where local cultural aesthetics are formed, transformed, transmitted, and 'downloaded' (Bohannan 1968; Ronström 2008: 1), and where the maker movement, in part, takes place. After my first time in the field in Aotearoa New Zealand, I had spent several months systematically tracking *where* the woollen blankets were appearing beyond art galleries, to find them exhibited and for sale within craft markets, tourist shops, auction houses, and private collections. It was at the craft markets where I first understood *how and where* social relations coalesce around materials (Gell 1998). The relationship between those working with woollen blankets and other craft items began to become more visible as I tracked the networks that made up the craft matrix of Aotearoa New Zealand.[84] The network of craft in Aotearoa is rich with linkages, social specificities, protocols, and relationships. It is has become a space for "sharing knowledge [that] creat[es] new types of makers [that] fuels new communities of practice" (Charney 2011: 7).

[84] After leaving the field and working though the data I had collected, transcribing interviews, reviewing archival documents, and organizing photographs I had taken, I realised the profound role woollen blankets had in drawing together people in the critical network of the world of contemporary craft. I returned to the field for a second extended period to explore more deeply how the woollen blankets participated, or enabled people to participate, in these social craft networks.

In my experience in Aotearoa New Zealand, craft markets are organised regionally, and have a central focus upon sellers whose work is classified as handmade. These sellers and makers of the handmade form a very discrete group of individuals. Mostly, it is women at the forefront of organising contemporary craft markets in Aotearoa New Zealand. Beyond organising the markets, women are also the main sellers and consumers. Women entrepreneurs reflect an economic and social reality of craft in Aotearoa New Zealand. As I repeatedly observed, women working with craft, especially craft that involves textiles, make up a very distinct community of practice (CoP) within these markets. As related anthropological studies on CoP's have shown (Wanger 1998), CoP's emerge from a shared interest. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand this is a shared interest in generating profit from craft byway of small home-based businesses that allow women to remain as primary caregivers, as well as participate income earners. Additionally, CoP's also participate in articulating their cultural values, showcasing their skills and labour, and fulfill their economic needs. As with all CoPs, "they are formed when social units are united by common areas of concerns or interest, interact regularly, share a common vocabulary, and, even without acknowledging it, learn with and from one another in the process" (Stevens 2011: 46).

The demographic of makers who participate in selling goods at these markets I studied form a well-networked group of savvy women.[85] Several times, it was indicated to me that with more and more women starting up their own businesses

[85] Some women I met with at times would self-identify as "mumpreneurs". However, I found this term had become somewhat of a polarizing term among women who operate small home-based businesses while simultaneously raising a family. There was not enough opportunity in the field to further explore what percentage of women actually applied this as an identity marker consistently. Again, as noted in the Introduction, it is this sort of language and study that would be addressed in a twin of this thesis that took-up a feminist analysis.

from home and wanting to sell at local markets, that more competition is evident than five years prior.

I summarise briefly here the composition of this CoP. On average, most makers fall within an age demographic of thirty to fifty years of age, are generally new mothers or have small children at home. Similarly, the demographic of consumers purchasing goods at craft markets are members of their peer-group, who have disposable income, and who share an interest in supporting handmade goods and seeking objects of nostalgia. As Dennis Stevens notes, "[w]hile these fairs reflect some characteristics of traditional craft fairs, the difference is that vendors are mainly Gen Xers who are commercially savvy, art-educated, conscious of good design, and who seek to transform what was once considered more feminised and domestic forms of creative and decoration into something new. In these fairs, it seems DIY craft as a subculture has an interest in capitalising on the subversive allure of hipness in an effort to subvert hegemonic systems of taste and consumption" (Stevens 2011: 52). To this I would add that by playing to a local aesthetic that is informed by nostalgia and the articulation of a national identity through the use of specific materials and symbols that they sell and trade in.

Moreover, added to the evaluation of the handmade on a local level is often the participation of makers who voluntarily take part in a global movement known as the "I TOOK THE HANDMADE PLEDGE" (FIGURE 44). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, being handmade and made in Aotearoa New Zealand are two important classifications on any manufactured item. At several stalls within craft markets (that clearly based participation on the fact that the works were handmade) and at retail shops that sell handmade goods, makers often exhibited small signs indicating their pledge to the

maker movement. Through investigating the history of this movement, it appears to be promoted mostly during the December festive season to encourage support of independent makers. This was a movement spearheaded originally by a consortium of organisations mostly within the United States guided in large part by the online global market place of craft known as ETSY.com. However, in Aotearoa New Zealand, promoting participation the handmade pledge campaign takes on additional value with economic signification to reflect national values of "home grown" products in light of other formalised national evaluation systems that promote the manufacture of goods and products within Aotearoa New Zealand.

While most makers of craft items made from woollen blankets are locally-based and therefore manufacturing within either their home or within home-based studios, it is safe to assert that these are items made in Aotearoa New Zealand. Additionally, since the majority of the blankets were manufactured within Aotearoa New Zealand buyers of items made from transformed blankets are assured of a double value of authentically New Zealand made items.[86]

[86] I digress here briefly to confirm that a national interest in producing and promoting products as "made in New Zealand" has a larger commercial history that is now formally integrated into the arts sector as well. Starting in 1988, the Buy New Zealand Made campaign was launched to promote the desire of consumers in Aotearoa New Zealand to purchase and export New Zealand made goods. Identified by the small kiwi bird within a triangular shape (for various forms of the logo, visit: https://www.buynz.org.nz/Category?Action=View&Category_id=1357), makers, manufactures, and business retailers must register with the organization in order to have their products formally branded with the Buy New Zealand Made logo. It appears that the companies participating in this registered program tend to operate larger scale productions when compared to home-based small businesses producing crafts such as the ones who sell at local handmade craft markets. While this is more relevant to Chapter One, the *Toi Iho Kaitiaki* Incorporated (TIKI) program is a membership program for artists that was "instituted [and incorporated in 2010 after an alliance with Creative New Zealand] to advance the authenticity and quality of Māori arts. Artistic works that carry the Toi Iho brand are approved by TIKI as genuinely Maori Made" (http://www.toiiho.co.nz/).

FIGURE 44. Signage for "I TOOK THE HANDMADE PLEDGE". 2011.
Devonport, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.
Photo by Fiona P. McDonald

Below is a list of the craft markets across the North Island (TABLE 7). These are the mico-field sites where I observed not only the handmade pledge in action; but specifically documented how markets dedicated to selling *only* handmade items was primary site for transformed woollen blankets that move through the networks of makers and consumers that coalesce around the process of the transformation of materials.

Through the resurgence of craft markets in the past five years (2007-2013), the CoP's have become more networked through social media and the increase in organised craft markets.

TABLE 7. Craft Markets and Fairs on the North Island in Aotearoa New Zealand

CRAFT MARKETS
Auckland Art & Craft Fair (Auckland)
Big Gay Out (Auckland)
Coatesville Market (Coatesville)
Craft 2.0 (Wellington)
Crafternoon Tea Market (Auckland)
Devonport Craft Market (Auckland)
Ecocraft (Wainuiomata)
Encraftment Market (Christchurch)
Frankitz Market (Wellington)
Fruit Bowl Craft Jam (Hastings)
Handmade Wellington (Wellington)
Kraftbomb (Auckland)
Matakana Indie Market (Matakana)
Parnell Artisan Craft Market (Auckland)
The Little Big Markets (Mount Manganui)
Titirangi Vintage Christmas Market (Auckland)
Waipu Highland Games (Market & Art in Tartan Competition) (Nortland)

FIGURE 45. Sample of Craft Markets and Posters.
Photos by Fiona P. McDonald 2011-2012

Communities of Practice—Online

"There is no single type of online culture, more of a multiplicity of sub-cultures, dependent on the aims or agenda of participants" (Turney 2009: 149). This is exactly what Latour was arguing when he wrote that any "good ANT [Actor Network Theory] account is a narrative or a description or a proposition where all of the actors *do something* and don't just sit there. […] As soon as actors are treated not as intermediaries but as mediators, they render the movement of the social visible to the reader" (Latour 2005: 128).

The social activity that takes place beyond the formal market setting, central "sphere of activity" found in the community and church halls extend into the coffee groups and virtual networks of online communities (Myers 2001: 32). Several of these groups are discussed here as they represent the "online labour" (Miller 2011: 21) of sales of handmade goods that runs parallel to the on-the-ground craft markets, and the networks of professional support that play out on Facebook. See TABLE 8.

To draw out an example here, one central group that operates on a national level is New Zealand Handmade (FIGURE 46) that identifies their ambition to "support independent craftspeople designing and producing New Zealand made, quality goods. We incorporate a diverse range of New Zealand designers, artisans, and craftspeople. Our goal is to promote members handcrafted work both within New Zealand and internationally and to create a vibrant creative community." With regular posts on their blog and what they call "blog-hopping", local craft businesses are featured online and via weekly or bi-weekly email announcements to members enrolled on their listserv. Eager to support the local maker movement in Aotearoa New Zealand, in 2012 New Zealand Handmade conducted an online survey using Survey Expression Software

to ask questions about makers, buyers, and online networks in Aotearoa New Zealand (See APPENDIX 7 for the results of this survey). The survey was organised into three parts: (1) General—that gathered demographic data such as age, gender, income, and participation with handmade goods (i.e. Buyer or seller), as well as assessing what sort of handmade goods are they making or buying; (2) Markets, Fairs, Fetes, etc.—that queried participants about their spending patterns and participation at markets both locally and online; and (3) Online Purchasing—was aimed at collecting data about 'online labour' (Miller 2011: 21) and sales techniques.

TABLE 8. Online networks in Aotearoa New Zealand

NETWORK	MEDIA
Auckland Craft Collective	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/pages/Auckland-Craft-Collective/147109797092?fref=ts Blog http://aucklandcraftcollective.blogspot.com/ Twitter https://twitter.com/AucklandCraft
Auckland Homebase Business Hookup Group	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/cleverladies/
Craft Out West	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/CraftOutWest
ETSY	Website www.etsy.com
FELT—New Zealand's online market for handmade goods	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/iheartfelt Website www.felt.co.nz
Handmade New Zealand	Website http://www.handmadenz.co.nz/
Lucky Penny Craft Club	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/272066210653/
New Zealand Handmade	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/newzealandhandmade Website http://www.newzealandhandmade.co.nz/
NZMumpreneurs	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/NZMumpreneurs

While it is not acceptable or accurate to draw any definitive conclusions from a survey with a low number of respondents as this one, it is interesting to note some of the information sought as part of the survey. Therefore percentages are only presented here as they are documented by the survey.

FIGURE 46. New Zealand Handmade Logo. 2012.
Used with permission by the organisation

Most respondents to the survey (92.31%; 108 respondents out of 124 participants) identified their country of residency as Aotearoa New Zealand. Additional data from this first section of the survey is absolutely congruent with my observations about the general gender and age demographics at the local craft markets and fair across the North Island. Mostly women participated in the survey (96.64%, represented by the 115 participants the responded to this question), with the age-range falling mostly between 26-35 (42.50%) and 36-45years of age (32.5%). Of the 124 participants in this survey, 74 confirmed they sold their own handmade goods (62.28%), with the aggregate of 14.28% (17 respondents) noting that they "use to", "plan to", or "want to but unsure how to" sell their own handmade goods. Additional questions in this first section of the survey ascertained information from respondents about the frequency of purchasing handmade goods in the past (question 6), with 120 respondents noting varying degrees of frequency from "occasionally" (40%), "often" (36.67%), and "regularly" (23.33%). Additionally, participants were asked to identify

"what inspires" them to purchase handmade items (question 7). The qualitative subjectivity of this question allowed participants to select "I am drawn to the story behind the object" and this response foregrounds interest in the biographic anthropological approach to studying material culture. Alternatively, participants were allowed to select aesthetic values such as "beautiful objects appeal to me". Additionally, values such as "skill involved", quality, and a desire "to support local crafters/makers" were among other response options. It appears from the New Zealand Handmade survey that participants in general favoured purchasing handmade items from "Craft Fairs and Markets" (question 10, 29.04%; 115 respondents), followed shortly thereafter by "websites/on-line market places" (23.99%; 95 respondents).

The results of the New Zealand Handmade—Craft Buyers Survey (APPENDIX 7) were made available to sellers so that they could avail of insight into buyer trends and preferences for costs, transaction types (cash verses credit cards), as well as online giveaways. Again, with such a low number of respondants to the survey I feel that it is the makers and sellers who observed more accurately the buying trends at the markets.

I found that the users of this data often tend to exchange this sort of information less formally and on a more regional level where smaller organisations mobilise both in person and online. During my time in Auckland, I become involved with one such collective of makers called the Auckland Homebase Business Hookup Group (AHBBHG). Organising themselves (meetings, information, etc.) mostly via a closed group on Facebook, they communicated issues online in advance of meetings organised at a local café in a suburb of Auckland (Henderson). These meetings took

place during the day (various times) either weekly or bi-weekly depending upon participant schedules and availability (see FIGURE 47).

The AHBBHG is by default comprised of all-woman, mostly mothers. One member referred to the meetings as more than just a “coffee group”, that the meetings at cafes allowed them to bring their children to what is, as home-based business owners, their version of a “business meeting”. The members actively participate in every meeting, and their conversations often carry on with members at markets where they were often selling their works at independent tables/stalls. Having sat in on several AHBBHG meetings, participated in their Facebook community, observed them at markets, and carried out one-on-one interviews with many of these women, it became apparent to me that central to their network was friendship, camaraderie, and trust. During their semi-structured meetings at coffee shops often interrupted by their children’s needs or ringing mobile phones often to take orders for their products, they tended to set a meeting agenda in advance that addresses current weekly issues or concerns that small business owners have about items such as web design, Facebook sales, EFTPOS terminals (debit machines), laws, branding and identity placement, as well as craft stall design and layout. Their mutual support in talking through issues with growing their business beyond, in some cases, the kitchen table allowed members to identify with certain struggles their fellow makers were experiencing such as lack of spousal support.

FIGURE 47. Facebook screenshot from the Auckland Homebase Hookup Group. 2012

Invited speakers are welcomed in to share their expertise, and internal members take turns to share their own strengths in some of the aforementioned areas. Some members work within the same mediums selling similar products, while others are completely new to how they can realise what is often called an amateur hobby of “prosperous excess” into a professionalised economic business (Adamson 2007: 140-141). Adamson goes on to suggest, “amateurism can be the very definition of unconscious cultural practice” where “it can also prompt anxieties of the most self-conscious kind” (Adamson 2010: 141).

Online there also exists a niche market for the sale of handmade craft items in Aotearoa New Zealand. Many makers operate their own website and mediate sales and giveaways online through personal websites and Facebook. However, a central

site known as FELT offers its services as an online marketplace that takes it inspiration from sites like ETSY.com. FELT was identified as one of the on-line venues for purchasing handmade items in the New Zealand Handmade Craft Buyers Survey discussed previously (22.47%; 60 of the 124 respondents).

According to the founders of FELT, it was started in 2007 and its role is to situate the website and those who sell from this forum as the main online marketplace of handmade goods in Aotearoa New Zealand. In an interview posted on the aforementioned New Zealand Handmade website (www.newzealandhandmade.co.nz), the founders of FELT wanted to create a "world class market place and community for New Zealand crafters and makers to showcase their talent at home and overseas. […] [T]o be a business that brings people together, encourages small business and provides inspiration, support and opportunities for creative folk" (NZ Handmade Website 2011).

Communities of Practice (CoP) that, like the ones discussed above, play out online and in craft markets show how local networks emerge, are sustained, and become central to the everyday life of the makers. These networks show the implication of how materials participate through their uptake by makers in the formation of economic structures, the articulation of national and personal identities, and the complex matrix rather than continuum of art and craft.

Conclusion

In focusing upon the local uptake and transformation of industrially produced products like woollen blankets handcrafted into new forms in Aotearoa New Zealand, my research has made visible how materials enchant the maker in compelling their action to collect, clean, craft, and market them into new handmade forms. This also

shows how the consumer becomes enchanted by the materials no matter what new forms they become as they act as triggers of memory of youth—good, bad, and indifferent, cultural diversity, and history. Both the qualitative and physical properties of materials, as this case study in Aotearoa New Zealand shows, are integral to how they follow their makers through their everyday lives and into craft markets and often participate as the vehicle and catalysts through which female crafters build small businesses. Seeing how the social relations coalesces around woollen blankets as they are manifested in the buyer-marker relationship in the handmade, and investment in the ironic play that recycling allows is evident in the transformation of woollen blankets into craft items that solicit the prolific declaration: “I know this stuff!”

CHAPTER 3

TRANSFORMED WOOLLEN BLANKETS AND INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PROPERTY CASE STUDY: TLINGIT BUTTON (BLANKET) ROBES IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Heritage

At the age of 12
my granddaughter Genesis
sews her button blanket
so she will be able
to dance it.
My grandmother
made me sit
so I could make one
so long ago
so that someone else
could dance in it.
This is Tlingit art.
March 4, 1987

—Nora Marks Dauenhauer—[87]

Introduction: What is a Button (Blanket) Robe?

The cultural experience presented in this poem by Tlingit elder Nora Marks Dauenhauer offers up an entry point for this chapter. A space where a materials perspective allows for understanding the complex cultural processes and customs in Tlingit culture related to knowledge production of how transformed woollen blankets become Tlingit objects and Tlingit works of art. In essence, this chapter shifts to present not necessarily how a transformed woollen blanket is a "technology of enchantment", but rather how the material that was used to create a technology of

[87] Nora Marks Dauenhauer, *The Droning Shaman—Poems by Nora Marks Dauenhauer*. Haines, Alaska: The Black Current Press, 1988.

enchantment, and piece of Indigenous regalia, has over time become invisible and irrelevant (Gell 1998: 43).

What is a button blanket? Before setting up the locality and context of this chapter in Southeast Alaska, it is first necessary to describe what a transformed woollen blanket in Tlingit culture looks like and make a quick note on the language I am using to discuss a transformed woollen blanket (FIGURE 48).

FIGURE 48. Octopus Blanket.
Property of Sealaska Heritage Institute. 2010. Used with permission.
Photograph by Fiona P. McDonald

At the commencement of my fieldwork in Juneau, Alaska, in 2010, I set out to research, as I thought, a *thing* and object called a "button blanket". To my understanding, a "button blanket" was the name ascribed by many—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—to a woollen blanket that was transformed by Indigenous men

and women into cultural regalia along the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and the United States through the addition of felt borders, buttons, and clan crests (either beaded or appliqué) to the woollen blanket (FIGURE 48).

According to historian Sharol Otness, who in the late-1970s carried out one of the main technical studies on Tlingit "button blankets", this style is defined as "[t]he 'Plain Button Blanket' [that] has a dark background, a border of red cloth on the top and two sides, and rows of buttons sewn on the background next to the inner edges of the border" (Otness 1979: 76). Further to this, Otness noted that there are three other styles one of which is "the 'Crest Button Blanket' [which] is the 'Plain Blanket' with the addition of a totemic crest worked in buttons on the central part of the background. Cloth appliqué is sometimes a part of this crest" as is seen in FIGURE 49 (Otenss 1979: 19). This is the main style of transformed woollen blanket, the one that includes a clan crest, which was studied in this project. In this case clan crests, or *shuka* (images and heraldic designs), tend to be representational through the depiction of sea life, plants (flora), animals (fauna), land features, and oral histories of migration. Additionally Otness noted:

> The next type [is what] [Frederica] de Laguna called 'Four Stripe' Blanket or 'daxundati.' No specific name was given to these blankets by any informant. This type is the Plain Blanket with two additional vertical Four stripes of red cloth inside the side borders. The 'Tahltan' Button Blanket is similar in design to the Four Stripe Blanket, with another cross stripe of red cloth near the top, making three red-outlined squares on the upper part of the blanket [FIGURE 49]. De Laguna calls this 'tl' icaki taxe' Tahltan Button Blanket or 'Crosswise over the Shoulders.' Names given this style by informants include, 'Box Blanket,' 'One with High Honors,' and 'All Tribes Blanket'(Otness 1979: 79).[88]

[88] In my experience I only observed two Talthan robes. One worn by Tlingit elder, Cyril George, at ceremonial events (he stored in a suitcase, and as I learned from both Cryil and other custodians of clan and private regalia, the best storage is "buttons in" when folding up a robe so as to protect any from being stressed or accidentally pulled off). This Talthan robe had three rows of mother-of-pearl buttons and was made of red and blue worsted wool. It was my

FIGURE 49. Talthan Robe. Catrina Mitchell. This *at.óowu* is guesstimated by Mitchell's family to be around 200 years old. Mitchell noted "this robe has been danced many times. Someone said it might have been danced at the last great potlatch in Sitka in 1908, but no one quite knows." Screenshot from video of interview. 2010

There are several ways that woollen blankets have been transformed into regalia. Through these creative and cultural transformative acts upon woollen blankets in Tlingit culture, I initially adopted the term "button blanket" through an awareness of Tlingit material culture from letters of correspondence with archivist, historians, anthropologists, and artists before going to the field, as well as through museum collection records, curatorial exhibition texts, historical texts, and it was the term used

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understanding that this was *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) of the *Deishetan* (a full discussion of *at.óowu* follows in this chapter). Second, was a blanket Catrina Mitchell shared with me that she noted was guesstimated to be over 200 years old and was made for her grandmother when she was a youth (FIGURE 49). This blanket is also property of the *Deishetan.* According to Mitchell, there were three identical robes made by her grandmother, some of which are now lost. The robe Mitchell shared with me was passed from her mother to her youngest sister. This robe, too, had three rows of mother-of-pearl buttons. Further research would be needed into *Deishetan* robes to determine if this is a clan-specific tradition or just a coincidence.

by several makers of “button blankets” themselves. However, as I demonstrate throughout this chapter, I swiftly observed that just as materials are changing form so too has the terminology and social relations around transformed woollen blankets been as transformative over time due to various cultural and material factors. Later in this chapter I draw more attention to the language around woollen blankets, or what Clarissa Rizal calls “The Language of the Robe”. For now, the various terms: a button robe, a button blanket, regalia, and *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property), lead me to use, for reasons of simplicity, ‘button (blanket) robe’ as the working noun. I place the word ‘blanket’ within brackets for this noun to show trace out how the language and use of woollen blankets has shifted over time. Consistent use of the term ‘button (blanket) robe’ in my thesis allows me to maintain my focus on the role and circulation of woollen blankets within the Tlingit cultural practice of making regalia, clan property, private property, and works of art as I present the movement and transformation of woollen blankets within Tlingit culture today and the increased invisibility of woollen blankets over time.

Today, the colour combinations of button (blanket) robes that I observed in action at secular and ceremonial events vary and make visible the difference between older and newer regalia, as well as objects that are *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) verses items that are private property (more on this later in the chapter). I argue this plurality of colour combinations further captures the innovative adaptation of new materials again into Tlingit cultural practices and foregrounds the imaginative transformation of cultural regalia in Tlingit society. However, historically, the main background of the robe tended to be a darker blue (navy) or black with a red border (the reasons for this is discussed later in this chapter), and red borders were

standardised in size to be approximately 5-8 inches in width, or the approximate width of the maker's four fingers outstretched.

On the back of the robe is a clan crest that is either beaded or has an appliqué applied and trimmed or outlined with small, often white-coloured, buttons, abalone shell buttons, or seed-beads in various colours (see FIGURE 50 and 51 as exquisite examples). This clan crest is *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) and *shuka* (images and heraldic designs), and its use on a robe represents the wearers right as a clan member to wear the crest. In the context of this thesis, I have permission to share photos of crests on button (blanket) robes. These images come from interviews where I fully acknowledge that all rights to these clan crests belong to the respective clan and are presented here with permission of those who shared their button (blanket) robes with me. However, the reproduction of clan crests is forbidden as this is clan property and is passed along the matrilineal line. The crest is the most central symbolic element entangled with one's Indigenous identity, and it is placed centrally on the back of a button (blanket) robe. A crest represents the larger cosmological frame or knowledge of the wearer. But a crest also acts as a visual language that is read, interpreted, and understood by clan members from both the wearer's own moiety and opposite moiety. This visual acuity is more clearly understood in the following section where the social organisation of Tlingit into two moieties is discussed. In many instances, clan members own the design of the crest that is often translated into a stencil that is passed on from generation to generation, from grandmothers to grandchildren, and from mothers to children. The placement of clan crests on the back of a button (blanket) robe serves multiple functions from visually pronouncing one's clan, house, or moiety affiliation.

Crests have also been used to visually narrate oral traditions, creation stories, as well as land claims. In the case of land claims, anthropologist Thomas F. Thornton notes that a button (blanket) robe encountered in his fieldwork in Glacier Bay served "simultaneously as a cultural map, historical icon, moral text, and legal title to the landscape" (Thornton 2008: 107).

FIGURE 50. Beaver Button (Blanket) Robe. *Clan at.óowu of the Deishetan clan of Angoon.* Guesstimated age of robe is 60-70years. Photo by Fiona P. McDonald. 2010

Additionally, the placement of a crest on a robe itself offers up an embodied experience where the wearer, I have been told, gets to dance with their ancestors and presents their identity in a visual and performative way. As the late Tlingit *Lukaax.ádi* clan leader *Gunx̲aa G̲uwakaan, Daanawáak̲*, whose English name was Austin Hammond, noted: "we wear our history" (Kawakey 1981). In this sense, Wanda Culp

(*Chookeneidi Ch'áak'* (Eagle) Brown bear clan) noted to me during our interview, "we are wearing our history" (FIGURE 51). In almost every instance where button (blanket) robe makers describe to me the reality that each robe has a history, it was further stressed that the more a robe is danced in both secular and ceremonial contexts the more power and value it, the wearer, and the ancestors who danced and will dance in it all acquire and accumulate. For example, Catrina Mitchell spoke to me about a button (blanket) robe that her grandparents had commissioned for her mother (FIGURE 49 and FIGURE 50).

When speaking about her experience with this button (blanket) robe (FIGURE 50) she told me:

> When I was 15 or 16 [years old], I was dancing in high school. When it wasn't cool to be native and I had this robe on [FIGURE 50] and I felt the power. I felt my ancestors with me. I felt strong. And I drummed at a time when there were no women drummers. My grandfather was a drummer (2010).

She went on to describe how the *way* the robe is danced can tell a lot about the wearer. For example, as she notes, in "Angoon women dip" and she followed this claim with a dancing gestures where the forward movement of her body made a dipping action. Then she contrasted this with more of a swaying action, where she noted that it is the women from Hoonah that "sway" when they dance. Any and all subtle differences in the movement of the body affect the movement of the robe and the actions of their ancestors. Consistently I observed one of Mitchell's main descriptions of the role the clan crest plays in the identification of the dancer. She remarked:

> This is a *Deishetan* robe made by an Eagle woman for a Raven woman [that is approximately 60-70 years old]. […] Before they [the dancers] enter a room, their hands are on their hips and their back is to everyone—that is to show the crest. So that people go "oh Beaver" and if I turn, they say "oh from Angoon" (2010).

Culp also noted that it is a Tlingit tradition in Southeast Alaska to enter a room backward while wearing your button (blanket) robe (FIGURE 51) so that others know who you are and for whom you are dancing with. As Helen McNeill shared with me "every clan house has idiosyncrasies in their designs" and therefore there becomes a level of legibility in the clan crests, not only of the clan affiliation but right down to the clan house. Therefore, in presenting a clan crest, as Mitchell noted in performance and as I observed, in secular and ceremonial events, the placement of the hands on the hips is known as *waat* (arm span), and it ensures the entire crest if visible to the beholder to enchant them.

FIGURE 51. *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) Brown Bear Button (Blanket) Robe. Crest is *clan at.óowu of the Chookeneidi clan of Hoonah.* Robe made by Wanda Culp, beaded brown bear done by Culps's mother. Micro-suede, felt, beads, mother-of-pearl buttons, thread. Robe is private property of Culp Culp made for secular performing contexts rather than ceremony. Photo by Fiona P. McDonald. 2010

The sizes of button (blanket) robes vary depending for whom the robe was made, or the materials that were used in its transformation. Historically, a woollen blanket was used as-is or was modified to a shape that would fit the individual for whom the robe was commissioned. On several occasions button (blanket) robe makers confirmed that the width of the robe is made to measure the distance of the wearers outstretched arm from fingertip (left) to fingertip (right). This distance is also known as *waat* (arm span). The length of the robe is measured from the base of the neck to the wearers mid-calf. This length prevents the dancer from becoming entangled in the robe while walking or dancing. In some instances, I observed children wearing robes that had been hemmed so that as they grew they could let down more material to maintain a mid-calf length robe.

A note here on the colour of button (blanket) robes as it relates to the use of woollen materials. As Smadar Lavie, Kirin Narayan, and Renato Rosaldo argue in *Creativity/Anthropology* (1993), by drawing on Roy Wagner's suggestion that creativity is "always emergent", they suggest that "members of a society's younger generations always select from, elaborate upon, and transform the traditions they inherit" (Lavie *et al* 1993: 5). This is true in relation to button (blanket) robes and the shift away from woollen materials into new synthetic fibres such as micro-suede. Today, while the form and design remain congruent with historical forms that include a solid robe colour and a single contrast colour for the band along with a clan crest and buttons, the colour combinations appear to be more numerous due to the incorporation of new materials. I observed the following colour combinations (robe-border): maroon-black; tan-black; orange-navy; green-white; green-black; yellow-white; white-pale blue; and blue-white. Consistent on all blankets—past and present—are the use of mother of pearl buttons,

or a white plastic button used to create a one, two, or three row outline of the border, and often used to outline the appliqué edges of the heraldic clan crest sewn on the back of the button (blanket) robe.

Locality—Southeast Alaska

Returning to Nora's poem brings us back to the specificity of this chapter with Tlingit culture in Southeast Alaska. Knowledge of, around, and pertaining to button (blanket) robes reveals much about the making of cultural property and heritage, the performance of culture through dance (secular and sacred), and the transfer of knowledge between *haa shagóon* (ancestors and heritage)—past, present, and future generations. The transformation of woollen blankets into Indigenous culture property has historically and presently participated in the maintenance of social relations in Tlingit culture in Southeast Alaska. My qualitative research in this chapter captures this maintenance as I approached both this field site and material transformation type primarily as an investigation with the individuals who transform them into cultural heritage and subsequently create technologies of enchantment. Like the data presented in Chapters One and Two, the biographical element of this chapter is again core to situating this work further beyond the consumption of materials, to understanding more completely anthropological ideas relating to Pierre Bourdieu's ideas about structure, practice, memory, and *habitus,* as well as social relations and the corporal nature of woollen blankets in Indigenous regalia (Bourdieu 1977).

Narratives around button (blanket) robes are presented in this chapter as primary data that demonstrate how the button (blanket) robe has moved beyond a woollen blanket with material decoration and embellishments, to the point where

there is now a complete absence of the woollen blanket, and what remains is a readiness for an adoption of new contemporary, even synthetic, materials. The knowledge of those who make regalia from woollen blankets and other woollen textiles captures distinct regional and cultural aesthetics that clarifies the future imaginings of the Tlingit material world. This insight in particular forwards my critical discussion into the role woollen blankets play in understanding the social contexts of technologies of enchantment, and the social relations that coalesce around materials and *things*.

There has been much anthropological traffic, so to speak, in Southeast Alaska since the early-nineteenth century. My primary research builds on and relies upon the depth of ethnographic and historical work of Frederica de Laguana, Tom Thornton, Rosita Worl, Margaret Blackman, Nora Marks Dauenhauer, Richard Dauenhauer, George T. Emmons, and George Swanton. By adding insights from semi-structured interviews with Tlingit regalia makers that I conducted during fieldwork, which was graciously facilitated through the Sealaska Heritage Institute,[89] as well as participant observations at both sacred and secular ceremonial events, and archival work, looking at the transformation type of woollen blankets into Indigenous regalia sheds contemporary light onto several distinct personal and culturally shared experiences

[89] As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, the establishment of the Sealaska Heritage Institute was "conceived by Clan Leaders, Traditional Scholars and Elders at the first Sealaska Elders Conference in 1980." Interestingly, "[d]uring that meeting, the Elders likened Native culture to a blanket. The late George Davis (*Kichnáalx- Lk'aanaaw*) of Angoon, spoke these memorable words: 'We don't want what you did here to only echo in the air, how our grandfathers used to do things… Yes. You have unwrapped it for us. That is why we will open again this container of wisdom left in our care.' These wise traditional leaders told the new leaders that their hands were growing weary from holding onto the metaphorical blanket, this 'container of wisdom.' They said they were transferring the responsibility to the Corporation." From the *Finding Adi for Ya Da Yeil Shaa Language Class Photographs Collection*, PO052. (Folder 1) 1991-1992. www.sealaskaheritage.org [accessed August 30, 2010].

makers of button (blanket) robes have with both the historic and contemporary transformation of woollen blankets into ceremonial Tlingit regalia known as *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property).[90]

All material and physical aspects of Tlingit culture are centralised around the Tlingit concept of *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property), that Richard Dauenhauer and Nora Marks Dauenhauer suggest means "an owned or purchased thing" (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987: 29). This is the most central working definition of *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property). As anthropologist Charles W. Smythe notes, "the category of *at.óowu* [where the *u* denotes the possessive, in this instance clan possession] are more completely understood as components of a larger system of ceremonial prerogatives that include songs, stories, names, designs, landscape features and sites, animals, spirits, shaman's spells" as well as regalia, clan crests, totem poles, and clan house, "the collective of material and immaterial representations of a clan's ancestors and the events and occurrences with which they [are] involved that give identity to the group today" (Smythe no date: 2). From this, the cosmological value(s) associated with materials shows how *things* are set in motion—literally and figuratively—within Tlingit culture.

To understand the complex role this material has in Southeast Alaska, I worked closely with ten Tlingit regalia makers to learn the function of the woollen blanket in Tlingit society today through their experience, and more specifically to draw out how the role of button (blanket) robes is a reflection of changes in Tlingit society. My findings are not only multi-sited, but result from several methodological approaches

[90] In Doreen Jensen's exhibition catalogue for *Robes of Power: Totem Poles on Cloth* (1986) at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada), she presents the images of button (blanket) robes along side transcribed narratives by the regalia makers from communities along the Northwest Coast.

that were used to formalise data sets. As an active participant and researcher at the Sealaska Heritage Institute, my attendance at cultural events, meetings, gatherings, camps, and secular events in and around Juneau was critical to defining key concepts around Tlingit art and cultural heritage.

As Wallace Olson noted, "[t]o fully appreciate [Tlingit] art, one must see it in its total cultural setting" (Olson 1991: 46). Add to this Alfred Gell's discussion of an art object, whereby he argues that:

> Art objects are produced in order to be displayed on those occasions when political power is being legitimized by association with various supernatural forces. Secondly, art objects are produced in the contexts of ceremonial or commercial exchange. […] The kind of technical sophistication involved is not the technology of illusionism but the technology of the radical transformation of materials, in the sense that the value of works of art is conditioned by the fact that it is difficult to get from the materials of which they are composed to the finished product" (Gell 1999: 175).

Of course, Gell uses the example of the Trobriand canoe-board, but this equally relates to the making of Tlingit art and clan property, and in this context situates button (blanket) robes within the Tlingit conceptions of art and cultural heritage *vis-à-vis* the larger global Indigenous discussions presented in Chapter One. The historical and ethnographic work mentioned at the outset of this chapter made visible to me not only the early introduction of woollen blankets as trade items to Tlingit, Haida, and Tsmishian cultures, as well as other Indigenous Northwest coast groups, but foregrounded the necessity for concentrating on a greater understanding of the way materials, as Annette Weiner would argue, come to be made and remade with new values attached in the course of social processes. In the case of Tlingit work with woollen blankets, I would add to this unmade. Here is where the richness of social relations that coalesce around materials resides in Tlingit culture and makes visible

how symbolic processes (as are discussed shortly, such as making and dancing) are where the power of materials and *things* come into being within Tlingit culture (Gell 1996: 84).

These social relations, as Tlingit clan leader and anthropologist Rosita Worl notes, are at the heart of the Tlingit concept of *haa shagoon* (ancestors—past and present). Worl states that "*[h]aa shagoon* is represented by our material and immaterial *haa at.óowu* that spiritually unite the present generation to the past and to the future" (Worl 2009: 3). The role of materials in this context perfectly captures David Graeber's sentiment that "nothing can be analysed in isolation. [That] [i]n order to understand any one object, one must first identify some kind of total system" (Graeber 2001: 14). Therefore, my role was to understand button (blanket) robes within the Tlingit system of regalia that are central to genealogy, property rights, as well as patrimony, and cultural protocols. Central to this was for me to comprehend the complexity of Tlingit concepts such as *shuka* (images and heraldic designs), *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property—as discussed below), and the classificatory registers of contemporary Tlingit art. While Graeber's remarks point toward Structuralism, my work traces out several key historical uses of woollen blankets, their transformation into traditional regalia in the form of robes, and the contemporary response through new materials through a sort of skeuomorph. This use of a material skueomorph allows the historical ghosts of woollen blankets to exist and persist within the larger system of Tlingit cosmology in the form of oral traditions where certain robes made on woollen blankets are remembered thanks to dedication ceremonies where the piece of regalia becomes *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing,

clan property), and the development of Tlingit cultural protocols in response to contemporary non-Indigenous pressures relating to private property.

By skueomorph, I apply it precisely as a concept to actively understand and approach a deeper understanding of the use of new materials in Tlingit regalia today. By definition a skeuomorph is a "derivative object that retains ornamental design cues from structures that were necessary in the original." In essence, this concept of a skeuomorph relates as they are "deliberately employed to make the new look comfortably old and familiar" (Wikipedia). In this case, new materials like synthetic fabrics that function in the same way as a woollen blanket as a surface upon which to place a clan crest, and a material to wear as a robe, are replaced by lighter weight fabrics that allow for better conditions in performances such as less weight and warmth, with increased movement for dramatic effect. This again ties back into how the button (blanket) robe is a work of art and a technology of enchantment as it evokes power within the beholder (Gell 1998: 48).

The Tlingit are a clan-based matrilineal culture organised by moiety. Clans are known as *<u>k</u>wáan* and are organised further by houses and clan members. Two balanced moieties, the *Ch'áak'* (Eagles) and the *Yéil* (Ravens), form the base of Tlingit social structure. Within each clan there are several houses that further organise Tlingit society. "Each house and clan is represented by several crest figures, usually animals or supernatural beings that had encounters with human ancestors. Even today, the clan divisions underlie nearly all aspects of Tlingit life, as balance and reciprocity continue to be paramount' (Smetzer 2014: 61). To date, Rosita Worl's introduction to understanding the basic foundation of Tlingit culture accurately captures the social structure of Tlingit culture as it responds to Western influences (Worl Forthcoming

2014). Each clan is sub-organised into clan houses that have historically spanned Tlingit territory along the Pacific Northwest coast, and further inland toward Chilkat territory and toward Atlin in the Yukon Territory of Canada. Rich oral histories tell of great migrations from inland Tlingit territory to the coast in search of the taste of salmon (Cyril George 2010).[91] Villages and settlements, again these are the *kwaan*, are central to clan organisation (Olson 1991), and Tlingit descent is traced through the matrilineal line. Historically, moiety exogamy was followed to maintain the core tenents of balance and reciprocity in Tlingit culture; however in recent decades this Tlingit practice has waned. The Tlingit believe in both the physical world comprised of plants, animals, land, and humans, and a "world of spirits" where ancestors dwell as guardians and reminders of cultural protocols (Olson 1991: 44, 45).

Oral tradition and storytelling are central to the transmission of cultural knowledge. According to Olson, "[a]mong the Tlingit, the term 'story' could have a range of meanings. It might refer to the creation myth, a legendary event in the past, or someone's personal experiences. Stories are [spiritual], and others are accounts of historical events" (Olson 1991: 45-46). According to Tlingit clan leader and anthropologist Rosita Worl's work, the ceremonial life of the Tlingit is actively practiced today in both secular and traditional contexts (Personal communication 2010). One of the main ceremonial events central to Tlingit ceremonial life is the *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party) where "living clan members are united with their ancestors through the use of *haa at.óowu* […] [that permits] the evocation

[91] Just before the completion of this thesis, Mr. Cyril George, a master Tlingit storyteller, clan leader, Tlingit elder passed away (April 2014). In interviews with Mr. George during my fieldwork in Alaska, he generously permitted me to record his telling of The Great Migrations (in Tlingit and English language). This story and others such as the creation of the mosquito are now archived in the Sealaska Heritage Institute Special Collection for public use.

of spirits" (Worl 2009: 3). The *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party) ceremonies as I experienced them (during fieldwork through generous invitations by clan members) were to commemorate the one year anniversary of the death of a clan member and to thank members of the opposite clan for their support during funerary services. "The *ku.éex'* [(memorial ceremony, thank you party)] requires the participation of both Eagle and Raven clans. The interrelationships and interactions between these 'opposite' clans during these ceremonies serve to restore spiritual and social balance and harmony that had been disrupted with the loss of the clan member" (Worl 2009: 3).

Working with anthropologist and Tlingit clan leader, Rosita Worl, I was guided to refine my interview questions specifically for local Tlingit communities so as to draw out more knowledge around clan crests, designs, and the commissioning of regalia (FIGURE 52, and see APPENDIX 3). These questions were supplied to collaborators prior to the interview, and if any specific items resonated with them, this was generally used then as a starting point to talking about the regalia they brought to share with me during our interview.

Understanding cultural production in Tlingit culture is complex. From art, to heritage, to *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property), the shifting regimes of value (Myers 2003) are ever present and have a complicated history. In this sense, Olson's suggestion that "art was pervasive" is accurate in this local context of Southeast Alaska. From "house fronts, screens, corner posts and totem poles; ceremonial staffs, hats and blankets; cooking, storage and eating utensils; weapons, paddles and canoes; clothing and ornaments" (Olson 1991: 46). As Tlingit artist and regalia maker Helen McNeill shared with me "making is a very conscious process" and

there is a “fine line” between those who make art and *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) as it relates to the division between a Western artwork and Indigenous cultural practices.

Art historian Aldona Jonaitis traces out the historical depth of artistic practices and collectors’ appreciation of Tlingit art in relation to the collecting practices of Lieutenant George Thornton Emmons and Louis Shotridge, the shift in the evaluation of Tlingit objects as art in the early-twentieth century that were exhibited in New York City (1941) and San Francisco (1939). Jonaitis notes that the most common Tlingit objects exhibited as art were “The Tlingit shaman’s bird mask, an oyster catcher rattle, a Chilkat blanket, and a decorated chest” (Jonaitis 1986: 7). Francesca Merlan also notes that “as Indigenous cultural production becomes increasingly valued as art”, something that was definitely spurred on through early exhibitions featuring Tlingit cultural property, these objects “also come to participate in the movements of the wider art world, and may free itself of some of the constraints of categorisation” (Merlan 2006).

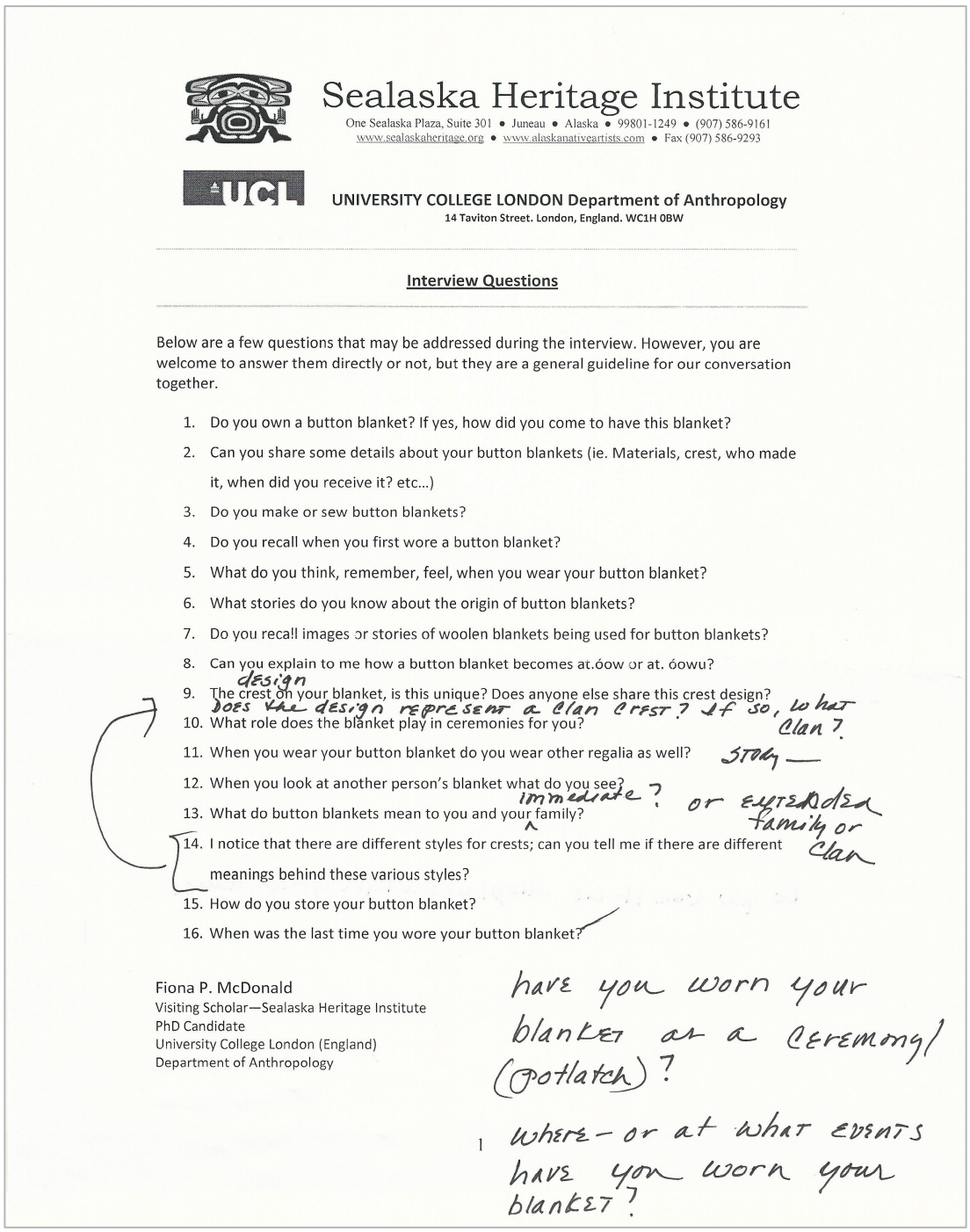
Though constantly “subject to pressures to remain recognisable as ‘Aboriginal art’, it also bursts the bonds of such constraints in some ways, but in its material forms and in the changing self-positioning of its practitioners” (Merlan 2006: 203; Graburn 1979). This re-positioning is evident in recent moves for juried art shows and exhibitions in Southeast Alaska where button robes are submitted for review as art. However, as Steve Leuthold argues in relation to Indigenous categories of art, the background to this is far more complicated. He notes:

> There are several possible responses to the strong contrast between Indigenous and Western understandings of “art” […]. One is to say that, because Indigenous cultures do not have a term for art and do not usually

> perceive art according to the attributes that are common in the contemporary West, they do not have art. Rather they have expressive traditions related to ritual, ceremonial, and other functional contexts. We might call these ritual objects or actions, rather than art (Leuthold 2003: 49).

In Tlingit culture expressive traditions related to regalia and other cultural heritage has been finely reorganised in the context of a public art exhibition that take place at *Celebration*, a bi-annual secular event that gathers Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian together for three days of Indigenous singing, dancing, and drumming, into three categories of creative production. *Celebration* is discussed more below. But within the art competition, all art is divided into the following categories: (1) Customary Northwest Coast Art; (2) Customary-Inspired Northwest Coast Art; and (3) 2-D Formline Design.

Within these categories we begin to see the shifting roles of values, not only of materials but also of Tlingit works as either private property or as clan property. My interest was in documenting the way Customary Northwest Coast Art and Customary-Inspired Northwest Coast Art often included the same pieces such as extremely ornate button (blanket) robes and profoundly complex Chilkat.



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Interview Questions

Below are a few questions that may be addressed during the interview. However, you are welcome to answer them directly or not, but they are a general guideline for our conversation together.

1. Do you own a button blanket? If yes, how did you come to have this blanket?
2. Can you share some details about your button blankets (ie. Materials, crest, who made it, when did you receive it? etc...)
3. Do you make or sew button blankets?
4. Do you recall when you first wore a button blanket?
5. What do you think, remember, feel, when you wear your button blanket?
6. What stories do you know about the origin of button blankets?
7. Do you recall images or stories of woolen blankets being used for button blankets?
8. Can you explain to me how a button blanket becomes at.óow or at. óowu?
9. The crest design on your blanket, is this unique? Does anyone else share this crest design? Does the design represent a clan crest? If so, what clan?
10. What role does the blanket play in ceremonies for you?
11. When you wear your button blanket do you wear other regalia as well? story —
12. When you look at another person's blanket what do you see?
13. What do button blankets mean to you and your family? immediate? or extended family or clan
14. I notice that there are different styles for crests; can you tell me if there are different meanings behind these various styles?
15. How do you store your button blanket?
16. When was the last time you wore your button blanket?

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have you worn your blanket at a ceremony/ (potlatch)?

where – or at what events have you worn your blanket?

FIGURE 52. Edited Interview Questions. 2010. Designed by Fiona P. McDonald

Material Culture: Object vs At.óowu

Returning to Reid, again, she observes in relation to contemporary art from an insider perspective that "[t]extiles are again taking their place in the ever-changing matrix of our evolving culture" (Reid 2010: 11). *At.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) is one of the most central concepts relating to both tangible and intangible property rights, knowledge, and Tlingit cultural heritage as introduced at the start of this chapter. However, the most concise summary I found extends from a document concerning the "Request for the Repatriation of Sacred Objects":

> The Tlingit term *at.óow* refers to all of the clan's prerogatives, all of the tangible and intangible property claimed by a matrilineal clan or house group. *At.óow* consists of landscape features and geographical sites located on land and water, such as subsistence sites, territories, legends, songs, personal names, spirits, and the designs represented on material objects or in face painting (Section 12: 4).

Additionally, the late Dr. Walter Sobeloff noted that "*At.óow* ceremonial property includ[es] clan crests and items like Chilkat robes, wool robes, dance hats with ermine tails [and] are used only during ceremonial events unless special permission is granted [by clan elders]" (Sobeloff no date).[92] Smythe, however, offers the most concise anthropological insight to situating *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) within the larger context of Tlingit cultural practices when he notes:

> [C]lan *at.óowu* are the inalienable possession presented to other clans during ceremonies as exchange items of special value, in a form of giving among people (opposite clans) who are equivalent to each other. Clans can expect that they will eventually be 'reciprocated; with a display of their *at.óowu* and clan ritual knowledge from those to whom they have given.

[92] Learning about *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property), in this project, was processual which is why I re-present it here. For example, during my research I observed several classes on Tlingit *At.óow* over the course of an academic term lead by Richard Dauhenaur at the University of Alaska—Southeast. During his classes, oral histories were presented and discussed both in relation to a scholarly interest (etic) and the students' cultural readings (emic).

> The value of an item grows as it is exchanged symbolically between clans, through successive displays and validations in ceremonies, and its spiritual connection to the clan is brought forward from past generations to the present and future ones. Such objects have great significance not just for the clan and moiety, but for members of the opposite moiety as well, that collective comprise the wholeness of Tlingit society (Smyth no date: 2).

As Thornton notes with astute clarity from his exhaustive research on Tlingit knowledge of the land, "*At.óow* represented this organic relationship between person and place […] including mapping the landscape of the world and of history onto the landscape of the body as constitutive elements of personhood. This is done most poignantly through naming and the donning of regalia that clothe the body in clan crests and ornaments, which in turn, clearly emplace the wearer geographically and socially" (Thornton 2008: 59). Thornton's argument also buttresses my own findings that "bodily *at.óow*, such as ceremonial headgear, Chilkat blankets, and other regalia, as well as ornamentation such as tattooing, face painting, and the like, effectively constitute a fourth dimension of Tlingit personhood. Through the embodiment of *at.óow* designs, these adornments literally extend and project the persona as a social being" (Thornton 2008: 59).

Understanding Indigenous Aesthetics through the Woollen Blanket

Returning again to Worl, she notes "[f]rom their resource base, the Tlingit developed a rich material culture and created aesthetics that reflected their world view and relationship with the environment" (Worl 1998: 33). Add to this, a relationship to community and ancestors as well as future generations. In the process of creating a specific aesthetic, they have also brought about a visual language, as Kenneth Burke would suggest, that articulates the "symbolic actions of objects" in

relation to their aesthetic function. An aesthetic that alludes to Howard Morphy's argument that "[a]esthetics is concerned with how something appeals to our senses" (Morphy 2006: 302). Let me elucidate this concept of aesthetics in Tlingit culture further by tracing out the specific structural elements of button (blanket) robes as they were shared with me by makers, wearers, and custodians.

As noted earlier, button (blanket) robes consist of the background to the robe that was historically a woollen blanket transformed into a robe through the creative human actions of sewing and cutting. On this blanket was added a border (in a contrasting colour), a clan crest on the back, and buttons (white or mother-of-pearl), and clasp or fastener near the neck area. These are the structural elements. The aesthetic elements, I argue in line with Burke, is the symbolic action of the button (blanket) robes. Part of this symbolic action is removing through language the term blanket from this transformed object. In this case, the transformed blanket ceases to exist. It is a robe. The woollen blanket moves into a "subsequent phase of use" where its relevance as a blanket becomes unimportant (Ingold 2013). How it enables an aesthetic experience is how the woollen blanket becomes a material to creating a technology of enchantment to perform Tlingit culture, heritage, and identity.

The most noteworthy commentary upon Indigenous aesthetics from an Indigenous perspective that I rely on here is found in the work of Steve Leuthold. In his argument, Leuthold favors a systems approach to understanding aesthetics in art through a non-reductive relationship to other elements of Indigenous culture. He notes that:

> Aesthetic experience is bodily, sensory; it is not just abstract and theoretical. Our value systems are rooted in our experiences of the world. In the context of Indigenous aesthetics, a conceptual explanation of the

> belief or value system may not be the only sources of discovering aesthetic ideas; rather beliefs and values are lived and embedded in social relations (Leuthold 2001: 6).

However, Aaron Glass, whose extensive work along the Northwest Coast with *Kwakwaka'wakw* culture suggest that "[o]bjects and their creators characterized 'ethnographically' tend to be viewed as *communally* significant, *traditional* in production and meaning, and subject to *particular functional* contexts; whereas objects and creators defined 'artisitically' are approached as *individually* significant, *innovative* in technique and interpretation, and available to *universal aesthetic* appreciation" (Glass 2006: 22).

The History of Materials and the Materiality of History in Alaska—the transformation of woollen blankets and self through regalia

Button (blanket) robes do not stand in isolation as a sole piece of regalia. Chilkat Robes and Raven's Tail robes are important to understanding the relationship to the cultural importance of heritage items made of wool and cedar bark prior to the introduction of woollen blankets into Tlingit communities through trade. In this section I present an overview of the history of materials in Southeast Alaska to set up a better understanding of how, as one of my collaborators Clarissa Rizal noted to me, "our history is written on our regalia" and how from her experience wearing regalia such as button (blanket) and Chilkat robes that she creates is a way, as she notes, of "wearing my mother and my grandmother when I am in ceremony."

On a material basis alone, the presence of wool has always been a critical resource in Southeast Alaska. As Libby Wantabe shared with me "people used what they have available", and the woollen blanket was "converted into a robe". Today new

materials that are light-weight, sweat-proof or easy to clean after dances, are as Gail Dabaluz wonderfully noted, being "Tlingitized" just like the woollen blanket!

The history of wool in and along the Pacific Northwest coast predates the introduction of woollen manufactured goods from overseas since the 1700s (Jensen 1986; National Museum of the American Indian exhibition text 2013, NYC). According to Martine J. Reid, Director of Content and Research at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art (Vancouver, Canada), in the exhibition catalogue for *Time Warp: Contemporary Textiles of the Northwest Coast* (2010):

> Mountain goat wool was a primary fibre used by weavers to produced ceremonial regalia. Unspun mountain goat wool as well as wool mats were used as currency and had a standard value up and down the coast. From the mythical past, the mountain goat possessed spiritual powers. […] Transforming the goat wool into prestigious garments was the prerogative of selected women. Elaborately designed robes were specifically created for the high-ranked person who inherited the rights to display crests manifesting ancestral power and wealth (Reid 2010: 10).

The collecting of wool from mountain goats also reflected, as anthropologist Thomas F. Thornton argues, both the ecological and sociological knowledge that are central to Tlingit culture where they "learn to think with the lands and came to achieve a variety of material and social goals" (Thornton 2008: 66). There is profound and obvious material syllogism found between mountain goat wool used in Chilkat and Raven's Tail robes that was readily legible and appealing in the woollen materiality of woollen blankets. Jonaitis's work on the Chilkat robes reveals, as she cites, that her own knowledge came from Bill Holm (1982), when she states the "Chilkat blanket was the result of a long development that included the synthesis of the open twined robes of

yellow cedar bark found distributed widely through the coast, northern coastal woolen blankets" (Jonaitis 1986: 21).[93]

Thornton's work is specific to this as well in that he looks specifically at the interconnectedness of the Tlingit self and the land. In his powerful study he rightly captures the density—culturally, spiritually, economically, and materially—that a transformed woollen blanket into a cultural robe carries on a technology of enchantment that affected him in his own research. For example, he writes:

> [T]he Chilkat and button-style blankets and other regalia that adorn Tlingit leaders are literally heavy, but more important they represent "weighty" and anchoring components of the collective being, including stellar features of the landscape, such as rivers and mountains, which figure prominently in the clan's *shukά* [ancestors]. These places are sacred sites for the clan that display them and are considered possessions (*at.óow*) though a transaction or "purchase" event (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1994: 15), often in which a clan member was "exchanged" (typically involuntarily) for the land (Thornton 2008: 60).[94]

Of particular interest to my research has been how anthropologists have used the button (blanket) robes to articulate their arguments around land, law, language, kinship, and social customs. In this sense, how the woollen blanket features in scholarship around Tlingit culture is very important. It relates to how material culture is employed in a secondary context to understand Tlingit culture. The following section traces out one example in relation to each of these areas. I cite here a specific example

[93] Jonaitis continues to trace out the technique of manufacture of Chilkat robes (1986: 21-22). Additionally, in a 2012 Public Lecture at the Sealaska Heritage Institute as part of the Native American History Month, Jonaitis spoke about the role of female makers of Chilkat robes. She states: "the meaning of women's work is much more subtle. And the meaning includes the cycle of nature—when you get the wool, when you get the dyes, when you actually start the twining. There is a sacred element because the natural world that provides these materials does have a spirituality" (Jonaitis 2012).

[94] I also experienced the remarkable weight of button (blanket) robes that I handled during interviews (Mitchell 2010) and in museum collections.

of how Thornton, as an anthropologist, used button (blanket) robes within his own research to get Tlingit clan members to talk about the land.

In speaking both with Thornton and through a critical analysis of his writing that sets forth a larger discourse on the anthropology of place in Southeast Alaska that moves on the work of Frederica de Laguana, it is clear that Thornton's own personal experience of seeing the centrality of button (blanket) robe to Tlingit culture has been integral to developing some of his own understanding of the material connections between regalia and land. In particular, Thornton uses the button (blanket) robes as the visualisation of how land is articulated in Tlingit culture. He does so by using specifically a robe known as the "*Chookaneidí* Glacier Bay Button Blanket" (cf. fig.3.2: 108), he also uses one that the late Mary Willis held for the *Deisheetaan* button (blanket) robe (cf. fig.4.2: 142), as well as one from Yakutat of the Mount Saint Elias tunic with blankets (cf. fig.4.3: 144). Finally, he employs a Chilkat Blanket (cf. fig.5.1: 175), *K'eik'w X'oow* (Black-Legged Kittiwake Blanket) (cf. fig.5.2: 181). In the first example listed above, the *Chookaneidí* button (blanket) robe depicts the clan crest of Glacier Bay. According to Thornton, "[t]his button-style blanket (*x'óow*) maps sacred sites and stories of the *Chookaneidí* clan in Glacier Bay, including *L'eiwshaa Shakee Aan* (Town on Top of the [Glacial] Sand Dune), where *Kaasteen* (bottom centre), a young woman in menarche, called to the glacier *Sít'k'I T'ooch'* (Little Black Glacier; centre), violating her taboo of seclusion, thus causing the glacier to advance and destroy the village and forcing her people to evacuate. The blanket also features other crests of the *Chookaneidí,* including the brown bear, and serves as a historical and legal record of *Chookaneidí* ties and rights to Glacier Bay" (*my emphasis added,* Thornton 2008: 108). In presenting this work in his critical ethnography of land in Tlingit culture,

Thornton further argues that a button (blanket) robe such as the one presented here "serves simultaneously as a cultural map, historical icon, moral text, and legal title to the landscape" (Thornton 2008: 108). But a robe with a clan story like this also makes visible cultural processes of how a clan can come to own a crest. I will address the cultural process of clan crests shortly.

Thornton's work suggests that the material connection in Tlingit culture relates to how "[t]oponyms embody both ecological and sociological knowledge, and Tlingits [sic] learn to think with the landscape to achieve a variety of material and social goals" (Thornton 2008: 60). This multi directional understanding of Tlingit cosmology is critical because, Thornton is arguing to a certain degree that it is the sound knowledge of the land that makes the regalia legible. As Thornton referenced above the "weighty" qualities of woollen blanket and regalia, I learned through speaking with Sarah Dybdahl about the history of button (blanket) robes in her family and the specificity of cultural patrimony. Dybdahl traced out the history of matrilineal accession of family and clan regalia, and in doing so foregrounded, mostly to me through her description of her grandfather's robe, a rather visceral sensory experience. Unsure whether or not her grandfather's blanket is a woollen blanket or is wool felt, Sarah intensely talked about the material qualities of the blanket such as its thickness and weight, noting that it was not like the regalia made today that tends to be more thin and looks more like the shawls that they wear in the lower 48 (a reference to Native American regalia in other parts of the USA south of the 49th parallel that divides Canada and the United States since the signing of the Treaty of Oregon in 1849).

This "weighty-ness" is teased out further into the cultural weight button (blanket) robes carry for the transmission of cultural knowledge and land claims.

Thornton turns to a quotation from Austin Hammond, the late *Lukaax.áadi* clan leader who participated in the film *Haa Shagóon* (1981) that addresses Tlingit ancestors. Hammond states, "On our clothing is the ownership and history of our land" (Thornton 2008: 60). Relating to my own findings, it is noteworthy in Thornton's work that he systematically illustrates how the woollen blanket is a piece of material culture that reaches beyond the aesthetic to be used as a vital tool for locating ones place in Tlingit culture but more specifically within the landscape. The narratives associated between a person and the land is manifest in the blanket as a visual articulation–a *thing*.

The woollen blanket served many functions in Tlingit culture, and Worl notes that "by the mid to late 1800s, cash and blankets had replaced the 'killing' of slaves to validate ownership of clan objects and the transfer of office to a new clan leader. The cash and blankets were then distributed to the guests, instead of being destroyed as were the slaves" (Worl 1998: 73). The literal and symbolic use and distribution of woollen blankets at ceremonies (more often called the potlatch in anthropological literature, a term derived from the Chinook jargon meaning "to give away") is a critical and complex system of maintaining *wooch yax* (balance, respect, and reciprocity) between the two moieties—*Ch'áak'* (Eagle) and *Yéil* (Raven). As Mary Douglas writes in her Foreword to Marcel Mauss's *The* Gift (1990), the giving of gifts is "part of a system of reciprocity in which the honour of the giver and recipient are engaged. It is a total system in that every item of status or of spiritual or material possession is implicated for everyone in the whole community" and that "in some specified way sets up a perpetual cycle of exchanges within and between generations" (Douglas 1990: viii).[95]

[95] It is not my intention to present a comprehensive history of potlatching, however the fact that blankets were considered items that reflected wealth allows for consideration of the

Interestingly, David Graeber's comments in relation to *Kwakwaka'wakw* potlatch mentions a "generic medium comparison" between Hudson's Bay Point blankets and animal skins that he draws from Marshal Sahlins. Citing from both Goldman and Sahlins, Graeber makes extensive reference to the proclivity of Northwest Coast tribes favouring woollen blankets not only in relation to their economic value as a form of currency until around the 1920s as a trade item, but also to the role they played in circulating clan crests. I return to this idea of the visibility of clan crests in my main argument. Graber notes "[t]he introduction of trade blankets allowed for a number of other innovations. The most important was the creation of what might justly be considered a system of high finance. In earlier periods, a noble wishing to amass wealth for a potlatch would normally have had to appeal to the members of his *numaym*, or tribe, for contributions [(see APPENDIX 9 for a contemporary Indigenous reflection on this practice by Ishmael Hope)]. Blankets allowed for the introduction of the principle of 100 percent loans […] [proposed by] Drucker and Heizer (1967: 78)" […] (Graeber 2001: 205). Graber also extends his thoughts on the role of blankets as potlatch gifts by noting that "in the distribution of potlatch gifts before the advent of Hudson Bay trade blankets: the skins of sea mammals like seals and otters were reserved for high nobility, forest mammals for other nobles, [and] cedarwood bark robes for commoners (Goldman 1975: 136-37; Sewid-Smith 1986: 63). All of which suggests why such generic gifts, as, blankets, or silver bracelets, or Singer sewing

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monetary value of woollen blankets. As was mentioned in Chapter One, potlatching was officially banned in Canada after the establishment of the Indian Act in 1885. Duncan Campbell Scott, the then Minister (Superintendent) of Indian Affairs (1913-1932), orchestrated one of the largest campaigns to hold regional trials for those who attended or hosted a potlatch that had been deemed illegal.

machines were officially disdained as 'bad things,' the distribution of which could itself be seen as a kind of assault on the recipients" (Graeber 2001: 2010).

Much anthropological consideration has been given to the social and cultural importance of Indigenous gifting and wealth ceremonies and the ensuing political strife. What needs to be considered then is how the woollen blankets factor in to this event as having a value associated with the accumulation of wealth. Photographic documentation of the preparation for ceremonies shows blankets piled high and photographed often with a person standing either beside or in front of the blankets that gives a sense of scale (Bohn Gmelch 2008). The active collection of woollen blankets as undecorated, unmodified objects is relevant when considered in relation to woollen blankets that were transformed into button (blanket) robes that became clan property and used a technology of enchantment. Looking at the multiplicity of roles that the woollen blankets have and continue to serve at a single event begs the question of value—what values are imbued in the blanket?[96]

The introduction and use of woollen blankets into Tlingit ceremonial contexts such at *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) is fundamental to how cultural value adhered to it as a transformed material and token of wealth, but also allowed imported materials to—as we circle back to a quotation by Tim Ingold introduced at the start of this thesis—be a surface that acts as a "space of continual interchange" (Ingold 2013). In this case, between moieties where Tlingit articulated their cosmological knowledge

[96] S. Otness has noted that: "Later, wages were paid in blankets rather than money by some businesses. Blankets for potlatching and used as "currency" were kept in boxes and stacked in the sleeping areas of the communal houses (Jacobsen 1977). Blankets used in potlatching as a unit of value were cheap white woollen ones from various sources. Boas (1895) noted that they had a single dark bar at each end. An 1871 order for the Western Department Outfit of the Hudson's Bay Co. shows 2,000 pairs of "Common White Blankets" of 2 1/2 points in addition to much lesser quantities of other blankets (Hudson's Bay Co., PAC Reel No. 380). (Blackman 1973)" (Otness 1979: 58-59).

and identity, and to those outside of the culture who viewed it as a commodity art form.

Martine Ried, in her survey of materials in contemporary art additionally traces out that:

> Soon after the time of contact, traders brought many new materials to the cultures along our coast. Euro-American sewn clothing was immediately a preferential trade item. During the years of sea otter fur trading, bolds of clothe were required for a successful deal. Later, Hudson's Bay blankets replaced the hand-woven cloaks of daily attire. These products of the industrial look quickly changed the fashions for the Norwest Coast Nations. The 'new' blankets were given additional embellishment of shell, buttons and appliqué, shaped into clan designs, to become the new ceremonial cloak (Reid 2010: 10).[97]

The history of trading blankets is well-documented in ethnographic literature and Tlingit oral histories. During a presentation of my research during fieldwork in Alaska I was offered the opportunity to give a talk during Native American History Month. After the talk, the Q&A session proved remarkably productive in capturing specific cultural knowledge about the history of the blanket in Southeast Alaska. Several people noted that originally it was navy-coloured blankets that were distributed by the U.S. Navy. Upon further research, the U.S. Navy ordered dark-blue, nearly black coloured blankets from mills such as the Witney Mills (see Chapter One). These dark navy blankets also contained the black indigo bands at the top and bottom along with point markings. During an interview with Catrina Mitchell (FIGURES 49 and 50) we learned that the button (blanket) robe she brought into share with me from the *Daishetaan* clan, was made on a navy three point Hudson's Bay Point blanket. Returning to the history of blankets in Southeast Alaska, Aurel Krauss, in his seminal work on Tlingit

[97] David Graeber notes: "Many anthropologists and historians have noted that remarkable bursts of cultural creativity that so often occur during the first generation or two after many traditional societies are suddenly integrated into a larger world economy" (Graeber 2001: 147)

culture conducted between 1881-82 (interestingly likely around the same date that the aforementioned *Daishetaan* button (blanket) robe was made) noted that he observed how woollen blankets eventually became a form of replacement currency for dentalia (tooth or shell) that was prized by American, British, and Russian traders working for, respectively, independent American traders, the Hudson's Bay Company, and The Russian-American Trading company (Krauss 1956: 42; Otenss 1979: 58; Graeber 2001: 169; Simeone 1995: 19, 49, 54-63).[98] The history of fur trade is fraught and there are distinct cultural perspectives.[99] In particular, the Russian-American Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, and independent American traders vied for trade relations with Tlingit trappers. Seal, bear, beaver, mink, marten are among just a few of the key furs that were sought for foreign markets. In return, man-made goods were introduced into Tlingit culture. These included mother of pearl buttons, woollen blankets, iron pots, calico fabric, and silver goods (pendants, etc). After the purchase of Alaska from Russia by the United States in 1867, the influx of western trade goods such as woollen blankets, calico, imported beads, and other industrially manufactured materials is evident in the transformation or adaptation of certain traditional items related to ceremonial regalia.

Calico is another introduced textile that has affected Tlingit customary dress. Megan Smetzer's exhaustive historical study of calico is a strong and complementary

[98] The main trading organizations mentioned in historic and ethnographic literature is the Russian Trading Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, free or independent American traders, however Simeone makes mention of The Pioneer Company that likely moved into Alaska post-1867 (Simeone 1995: 22). Simeone also notes that by the 1930s, woollen blankets were fetching various prices (in US dollars): "black ones for $14 each, creamy ones with green, brown, and yellow borders for $13.50 each" (Simeone 1995: 29).

[99] According to Thornton, "[T]he fur trade was a source of many conflicts. Tlingits [sic] destroyed the Russian settlements at Sitka in 1802 and at Yakutat in 1805, sacked the British Hudson's Bay Company outpost at Fort Selkirk in 1851, and periodically attacked Aleut and Kodiak hunters who violated Tlingit Territorial sovereignty (Emmons 1991; J.R Gibson 1992).

counter-point to my study of woollen blankets. In her work, Smetzer takes up Fred Myers's proposition around the role of 'intercultural objects' by arguing that calico fits this sort of consideration. She argues that "[I]ndigenous uses of cloth participate in the construction of new social circumstances and contributed to the masking of longstanding cultural practices that were being increasingly suppressed by colonial authorities" (Smetzer 2014: 60). Smetzer references the increased presence of cloth alongside woollen textiles as gifts and within ceremonial contexts, as do other historians such as William E. Simeone (2002). Simeone equally acknowledges that "[c]loth is usually the only gender-specific gift, as it is most often only given to women, who use it for making dresses" (Simeone 1995: 60). The combination of calico and woollen textiles into Tlingit material culture in Southeast Alaska has had a profound consequence in how Tlingit culture is 'observed' today, given my own work that tracked a woollen blanket into cultural regalia, rather than starting with regalia and looking outward. On this note, materials are central to how we come to know, understand, and re-present cultural heritage in every shifting, growing, and dynamic cultural contexts (Lévi-Strauss 2013).

Making and Performing Property—Sites of Engagement, Language, & Traditions

Richard Dauenhauer shared with me that "traditional art is always alive in Tlingit performance" (Dauenhauer Personal communication 2010). This section turns now to look at the dancing of button (blanket) robes as acts of performing cultural knowledge. Historically, robes were commissioned in accordance with Tlingit cultural practice of commissioning a member from the opposite moiety to design and create a blanket so as to maintain *wooch yax* (social and spiritual balance) as I addressed

earlier. The commissioned robe was then brought out at a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) and dedicated. I was informed that once a button (blanket) robe is/was brought out at such a ceremony that it was considered complete and no more work was done on the blanket (for example, adding buttons, enhancing the crest design, or additional embellishment). During my fieldwork with regalia makers, part of my objective was to see if this practice was still practiced. As Libby Wanatabe and Gail Dabaluz informed me, the practice of cross-moiety commissioning is not as common today for many reasons. These reasons include the increase in private regalia that is not clan owned *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property), the time investment needed, and costs. Additionally Libby pointed out that the knowledge that goes into making a robe is the result of a "lifetime of experience" that she learned from her mother, and in turn using that knowledge to create something that will last a lifetime often does not have a price tag.

The transmission of knowledge between generations in a matrilineal line was profoundly articulated during all of my interviews. Consistently all regalia makers had learned the skills of sewing and beadwork, as well as the structural form needed to create a button (blanket) robe from their mothers and matrilineal aunts and grandmothers. In turn, at the time of the interviews, regalia makers were all actively teaching their children and grandchildren (mostly daughters and granddaughters, and a few grandsons) this knowledge of and value of a button (blanket) robe by working with them on their own regalia that contained family crests with personal modifications to the design of the robe. Again, here is where a feminist analysis of gender relations might be appropriate and would be foregrounded in a twin dissertation. For example, with the weaving of Chilkat robes, it has been stressed

between generations that this was an art form reserved only for women. Master weavers like Jennie Thlunaut stressed to her pupils, in particular to Clarissa Rizal, not to teach men unless their sexual orientation was such that they were homosexual, or of a third spirit. There are many places where this tradition has been cited, but most recently Tlingit artist Ricky Tagaban has been training, upon her invitation, with master weaver Clarissa Rizal because he is a gay man (Bartholomew 2014).

But I wish to return to my strict focus on the materials used to make the button (blanket) robe I observed that the woollen blanket, or woollen fabric, became nothing more than a surface that allowed the cultural and intergenerational exchange of knowledge. The woollen blanket became nothing more than a historical *thing*, where new woollen materials were used, and now an even more lighter weight fabric that still mimicked the kinetic movement of the original woollen blankets took prominence. The making of robe is a way to learn not only Tlingit cultural values, but also to participate in the maintenance and development of Tlingit practices. By this I mean that a younger generation is able to innovate new traditions around private regalia that breaks away from the aforementioned cross-moiety commissioning. However, Libby Wantabe did clarify that today if a clan wished to have a new piece of clan property, they are more likely to follow customary Tlingit protocols and have a member from the opposite moiety create the new item (such as a clan hat, paddle, robe, etc…) that they would pay for with an item of equal value or monetary payment.

As a non-Indigenous outsider I have no customary rights to own or make a button (blanket) robe and was therefore unable to participate in the making of a button (blanket) robe in the same capacity I had while working with materials in Aotearoa New Zealand where craftspeople and artists in Aotearoa New Zealand

allowed me to sew with them in their studios. Therefore, the closest embodied knowledge I acquired when working with materials in Southeast Alaska was as a volunteer at a secular children's Culture Camp (17 August 2010) that was organised in Juneau by Tlingit & Haida Community Council entitled, *Blanket Making*. When I first arrived, I began by working with children who making headbands that they were hand sewing together. Each child had fabric and was guided by a general pattern but they were free to place the stitches and buttons as they wished. I worked with them by threading needles.

During this event as I threaded needles I observed how a younger generation (approximately 7-12years of age) worked alongside Tlingit elders from both moieties and volunteers to create their own regalia such as tunics made of cotton and head bands. Other youth (approximately 13-16years of age) worked more independently under the watch of the Culture Camp organisers to make their own proper button (blanket) robes on a thin-weight woollen fabric. Many children shared with me through casual conversation their generative knowledge about their own button (blanket) robes. For example, one child noted his mother to be a good sewer of regalia noting "she is amazing", while two young sisters debated over the size of stiches where one corrected the other by saying "you need to make smaller stitches. That is what grandma said." In both of these situations, children were demonstrating learned cultural knowledge from their mothers and grandmothers not only related to the technical skills of making regalia, but the knowledge of their clans. Another child shared with me his experience of having a red and black button (blanket) robe with three *l'ook* (coho salmon), one of two main clan crests of the *Yéil* (Raven) *L'uknax.ádi* from Yakutat, and as he described the three *l'ook* (coho salmon) on his robe while he

gestured with his hands a circular movement and soon moved to show me how he was a *l'ook* (coho salmon) and how he as a clan member danced—a dance he learned from his maternal uncle. In this instance the child's interaction with his button (blanket) robe made visible several insights to Tlingit culture such as the transmission of knowledge from uncle to nephew. As a matrilineal organised society, education and the transmission of specific culture knowledge was often the responsibility of the mother's brother, the child's uncle (Swanton 1908; Worl forthcoming 2014).

The making of button (blanket) robes in the context of the camp was, as I observed, a collective and structured opportunity for children to learn more generally about regalia, language, singing, and drumming. A more complex understanding of the making of regalia in this project was thus ascertained from working with button (blanket) robe makers in the context of interviews. For example, in conversation with Rosita Worl, she shared with me the story of how her first button (blanket) robe was commissioned in 1967 by Emma Marks. Marks, who was a *Yéil* (Raven) and of the opposite moiety to Rosita's Thunderbird clan of the *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) was commissioned to make the robe. Commissioning a member of the opposite moiety to make the robe was critical to maintaining *wooch yax* (social and spiritual balance). Rosita told me that Mark's son had created the design of the crest—here, Mark's son was a *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) because it follows a matrilineal line. Worl's story of the commissioning and making of her first button (blanket) robe succinctly captures the traditional and customary practice of acquiring new regalia. In the process of my research, I systematically documented if this practice of commissioning robes was still practiced, and observed that it has slightly shifted where people are now making their own regalia, but often still have the crest designed by a member of another moiety. I argue that the shifting

practices reflect not only the ever-changing values of clans in light of private property laws in Western society (Worl forthcoming; Worl 1998), but also the increased use of button (blanket) robes for secular dance events where regalia is not often brought out or dedicated as either family or clan *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) in ceremony or named.

A button (blanket) robes, then, becomes an integral tool when, as noted in the Introduction, for performing culture, self, and identity in this specific Indigenous context. To see a robe in action is to see it as a technology of enchantment—a corporal experience on the part of the dancer between the robe and the crest, the dancer and their ancestor, as well a connection to and visual articulation of one's clan identity, and the notable effects this technology has upon the beholder. Gerry Williams and her daughters Libby Wanatabe and Gail Dabaluz, through their generous knowledge, permitted me to gain insight into the contemporary importance of dance to performing one's identity. They all noted that owning a robe allows for more of an opportunity for a Tlingit clan member to be active through participation in Tlingit culture through dance.

In Tlingit culture the button (blanket) robe is worn one way, around the shoulders clasped at the front, whether dancing or otherwise—this is part of the local aesthetic to Southeast Alaska. In other Indigenous communities along the Northwest Coast, there are other ways the robes are worn and fastened. However, in Tlingit culture the button (blanket) robe is draped across the shoulders so that the clan crest occupies the back of the wearer. The robe is often fastened in the front just under the chin or across the chest. There are various mechanisms for securing a button (blanket) robe in place such as clasps or bib like bands that button on each side of the collar

area, in some instances I observed safety pins used as fasteners. Edwina White shared with me that this clasp area is often the chance to represent the genealogical relationship to the button (blanket) robe owner's grandfather's clan, thus allowing for the identification of them as *dachx̲ánk'* (grandchild of a clan), their grandfather's clan.

Just briefly here as I return to this idea again shortly, dancers wearing button (blanket) robes often place their hands on their hips with elbows pointed outward so as to expand the surface area across their back and thus make the clan crest more visible, while simultaneously enhancing the flow or movement of the overall robe.

I wish to return to Howard Morphy here. While he is speaking specifically about ancestral connections in Yolngu painting in Australia, his argument that the "power of a ritual cannot be reduced to aesthetic effects, or that such effects are produced in order to create feelings of solidarity" (Morphy 2006: 317) somewhat applies in the context of button (blanket) robes in Tlingit ceremonial and secular contexts. Leading Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson notes that "[t]he purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves" (Wilson 2008: 11). When performing ones identity through dance, the dance incorporates not only the body, but the regalia and the symbolic significance of the dance. In most instances in Tlingit culture dancing is a collective experience between dancer, viewer, and ancestors (Leuthold 2003: 16). One of the regalia makers that I worked with, Wanda Loescher Culp, who is *Chookaneidí* (*Ch'áak'* (Eagle)-Brown Bear clan), descendant from Glacier Bay, and grandchild of the *Luk'naxadi* (*Yéil L'ook* (Raven-Coho) clan) of Lituya Bay on the outer coast near Yakutat, informed me in one of our first conversations during an entrance procession to a fundraising dance on the island of Hoonah, "It is our job to make them [the button [blanket] robes] dance." This

mention of cultural responsibility by Loescher Culp is profound. The importance of dance within ceremony and material culture is critical to how cultural heritage is performed through materials, and is central to understanding the centrality of Tlingit aesthetics. And, as noted above, local aesthetics, or culturally specific aesthetics are entangled. As Jacque Manuqet notes in *The Aesthetic Experience* (1986), "aesthetic objects are susceptible to accommodating several meanings, each validly posited by a different beholder" (159). Conveying multiple meanings is part of a "communion through experience" whereby the person wearing the robe and the person observing the performance of culture create a shared space where knowledge is transmitted. Some might call this a liminal space, but each moment or experience of this is unique and therefore liminality cannot be assumed.

James Clifford once noted, and I draw it out here in relation to heritage in Alaska in general, "[w]hat counts as 'tradition' is never politically neutral […], and the work of cultural retrieval, display, and performance plays a necessary role in current movements around identity and recognition" (Clifford 2008: 8; Graeber 2001: 75). This was for me *the* foremost poignant personal observation I experienced at both secular and sacred ceremonies. On this note, the role of the social in performing with and through material culture and cultural heritage is profound in relation to the role button (blanket) robes play for Tlingit social memory. Paul Connerton wrote that "[i]f there is such a thing as social memory […] we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies; but commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative" (Connerton 1989: 4-5). For example, starting in 1982, the Sealaska Heritage Institute, as mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, the not-for-profit sector of the Sealaska Corporation that was established after the Alaska Native

Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA 1971), has hosted a biennial festival known as *Celebration*. At each secular event, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian tribal members from various communities gather for three days of dancing, singing, and performance in Juneau, the state capitol of Alaska. This 'region-wide' gathering, as Kirk Dombrowski notes, is what can be accurately considered a "new tradition" (Dombrowski 2001: 65). Rightly, Smythe refers to such performances as "social action" whether in the ceremonial or secular contexts (Smythe no date: 2). Dobrowski has been extremely vocal in offering up much critique of *Celebration*, in particular, he has looked at the role of Alaskan Native Corporations in Alaska under the establishment of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). It is not my intention to focus upon this debate in my current research, just as my focus was not to take up a feminist discussion of familial relations in Tlingit culture; rather my primary focus, by observing regalia 'in action' at secular and ceremonial events, was to follow the materials to see their role in performing culture. But, for clarification, Dobrowski's argument in brief takes up a rather pointed neo-colonial perspective that challenges the legitimacy of secular events such as *Celebration*. This does not address my interest in the materials used at these sites of cultural performance and Indigenous knowledge exchange. In general, my experience and observation was not necessarily aligned with the arguments of Dombrowski where he questions the authority of organisers of secular events by suggesting that they assert a pan-cultural authority over fellow Tlingit. I observed that the dynamism between community and clan/tribal dance groups is very distinct at *Celebration* and to look at such events as neo-colonial contexts dismisses the diversity of cultural representation present and performed. The dances performed, songs collectively sung, and regalia are both new and traditional. Dombrowsi suggests that

the "culture movement of today is very much the public face of […] villages. Supported by native corporations, village dance groups perform at most major village and regional social events. The work they do in teaching and performing contemporary versions of cultural practices plays a large role in the symbolic representation of local identity" (Dombrowski 2001: 7).

The Sealaska Heritage Institute situates *Celebration* as follows:

> Celebration is a new tradition. During earlier times, a clan from one moiety would always host a clan from the other moiety. An Eagle clan, for example, might host a Raven clan and, then, the reverse would occur in order that balance, reciprocity, and respect be maintained. Those who danced together as either hosts or guests were from one clan, one side. Now, clan members have scattered in order to pursue careers and personal interests, and the formal system of reciprocal obligation has become more difficult to maintain although parties and potlatches are still a vital part of Northwest Coast culture. At Celebration, some clan members still gather as single-clan Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian dance groups but most groups at Celebration represent combinations of many clans. As times have changed, the peoples of the Northwest Coast have adopted revitalized festival traditions while continuing to maintain the old. Although Celebration follows the pattern of a traditional ceremonial it is not a potlatch or memorial party. Adoptions, name giving, memorial services, and other events that are a proper part of those traditional gatherings are not part of Celebration and are observed at other times (Sealaska website).

Celebration 2010 marked my first experience of observing secular Tlingit cultural performances incorporating button (blanket) robes, Chilkat and Raven's Tail Robes, tunics, along with other regalia—both private and clan owned—such as carved wooden ceremonial hats, cedar bark hats feature ermine fur, as well as beaded and appliqué bibs, leggings, aprons, vests, gloves, and octopus bags.

In 2011, during funeral proceedings of the late Tlingit leader Dr. Walter Soboleff, a member of the *Yéil* (Raven) and Dog Salmon clans of the *Kha'jaq'tii* who passed away at the age of 102, one member of his *Yéil* (Raven) clan noted to the opposite *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) clan "we thank you for being the blanket to catch our tears

before they touch the ground". When these words were spoken, the speaker embodied a gesture of wrapping himself in the blanket of protection and support that the members of the *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) clan had offered during their mourning period. Through my fieldwork in Southeast Alaska, I observed button (blanket) robes in action in multiple secular and ceremonial contexts. These included observing button (blanket) robes being danced at Celebration 2010 (as well as later a video recording of Celebration 2012, 2008, and 2006 archived at the Sealaska Heritage Institute), the Alaskan Native Brotherhood/Alaskan Native Sisterhood Fundraising Dance event in Hoonah (2010), The Tlingit & Haida Community Council Culture Camp (2010) in Juneau (AK), and at two the post-mortuary *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) for the *Kiks.adi* and the Marks (2010).[100]

"Language of the Robe"

The translation of and language around "woollen blanket" in English and *Lingit* (Tlingit) becomes a very elucidating site of knowledge production (TABLE 9). Christian J. Kay points out that "[w]hen problems of definition arise, the native speaker of a language has a reference point in his or her own usage, or can interrogate the usage of others" (Kay 1997; 51). Kay goes on to say that "[i]t is when objects are sufficiently valued in a society to be frequently discussed and referred to that detailed terminologies will emerge […]" (Kay 1997: 57). This was the case within Southeast Alaska. Prior to interviewing clan members who make and commission regalia, I worked with *Lingit* (Tlingit) language speaker Katrina Hotch at the Sealaska Heritage Institute on

[100] Additionally, archived at the Sealaska Heritage Institute is the Tlingit wedding ceremony of Jackie Johnston Pata and in this ceremony the button (blanket) robe features are part of the wedding attire.

vocabulary related to the making of button (blanket) robes. Beginning with basic terms relating to buttons, blanket, making, robe, etc… the list grew to the vocabulary presented in TABLE 9 by the end of my fieldwork and data analysis.

TABLE 9. Summary of Language Observed around Button (Blanket) Robes

English	*Língit* (Tlingit)
Blanket Robe	*X'óow*
Blanket Hudson Bay	*Kinguchwáan X'óow*
Woollen Blanket (potlatch gift or dancing)	*L'ée*
Blanket button	*Kaayuk.óot'I, X'óow*
Button	*Kaayaku.ótí, yuk.óot', yaka.óot'*
Bead	*Kawóot*
Dance regalia	*L'axkeit*
She sewed on it	*A kát akawlikáa*
Handiwork, handmade crafts	*Kaa ji.eetí*
Arm span	*waat*
Pattern model, template for it	*a kaayí*
Put on the button blanket	*Ida'óo wé kaayuka.oot'x'óow*
S/he sewed it on it	*A kát akawlikáa*
S/he sewed beads (or embroidered) it	*An káa akaawakáa*
S/he sewed it	*Aawakáa*
S/he sewed	*Wudikáa*
Thread	*tás*
Ceremonial property	*At.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property)
Member of the opposite clan	gunateknaayi
During a ceremonial event, a person is robed by g*uneitkanaayi* participating in the activity and thereby can be acknowledged properly in the ceremony.	

In ethnographic literature relating to Tlingit culture, it was Thornton who causally referenced the absence of blankets as a relational noun being 'blanket-less', however this tells more about ownership of the blanket rather informing any greater insight into the process of making a button (blanket) robe. Additional language relating to robes, most frequently references Chilkat robes relates to "killing a blanket"—meaning a cultural act upon a Chilkat robe where it is cut into pieces for distribution often performed at a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) (de Laguna 1972; Worl forthcoming

2014). 'Killing a blanket', as I learned through various informal conversations, is not as frequently practiced today, but historically is a symbolic act carried out by the host of the *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony) to show their extreme wealth as a Chilkat robe is highly prized *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property). The destroyed robe is distributed to guests in accordance with the cultural process of distributing wealth to maintain *wooch yax* (balance, respect, and reciprocity).

Intellectual Property: Decoration, Ornamentation, or Complex Social Process?

Referring to decorative elements contained within Tlingit material culture has long occupied traditional art history and anthropology, and arguably has diminished the complexity that such 'decoration' to woollen blankets has meant to makers, dancers, custodians, and future ancestors of objects that are carved, woven, stitched, and embellished. There are many ways to talk about the transformation of woollen blankets into Indigenous material culture from a Western perspective. The language so often used such as decoration and ornamentation, is a non-Indigenous construction used to understand through difference, in this instance, Tlingit cultural heritage. As James Trilling notes "[o]rnament is as culture-bound as any other art" (Trilling 2003: 27). He further argues that "[t]o grasp a culture's ornament, from within or without, is to grasp its heritage, its uniqueness, and its joy" (Trilling 2003: 3). From a qualitative perspective, how makers address their works is perhaps the best way to "grasp" the centrality of heritage in Tlingit culture, and helps to move away from Western constrictions of the Tlingit material world. I argue here, however, that the making of a button (blanket) robe involves more than a reduction to its decorative elements, the

embellished woollen blankets, or the ornamentation of a foreign textile.[101] As master weaver and artist Clarissa Rizal (Hudson) notes, "our history is written on our regalia" when talking about her project with photographer and artists Donna Foulke, *Dance Regalia Documentation Project* that started in 2004 in Juneau, Alaska. Rizal's explanations around her embodied experiences of wearing button robes and regalia are insightful to understanding her connection to her ancestors. In conversations about the wearing of regalia she noted, "when I dance I know she is dancing with me" referencing here to her female matrilineal ancestors.

Many of my collaborators spoke of the spiritual power of the clan crest on their button (blanket) robe, and Rizal even suggests that beyond the categories of art mentioned at the outset of the chapter, such as customary, contemporary, and formline, she would add to this "spiritual art form". Here we see that the intangible properties of clan crests are entangled in the robes (Worl 1998). The regard for spiritual essence in Tlingit material culture contributes to understanding how the woollen blanket has participated in a material liminal process of transforming the button (blanket) robe from an object to an ancestor renders the blanket invisible and the crest visible. The woollen blanket merely acts as a platform for the crest to exist. This is part of understanding how a *thing* like a woollen blanket goes from being a woollen blanket to being a robe, to being dedicated at a ceremony and becoming a technology of enchantment known to the Tlingit as *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property)–something that allows them to perform their culture in multiple

[101] According to historian A. Hamlin in *A History of Ornamentation: Ancient and Medival* (1916) "By *decoration* is meant the adornment or embellishment of an object by purposed modifications of its form or colour" (3).

ways.[102] Just briefly for clarification here, there is a distinction between an object as *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property) versus the crest as *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property). For example, citing Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer (1987: 29), the "use of the term or concept '*shuka*' to refer to the images or visual designs depicted on a ceremonial object, and '*at.oow*' for the object made with the design." In this sense both the blanket and the crest are active through a liminal state of transformation.

Just to reiterate, the *shuka* (images and heraldic designs) as clan property on button (blanket) robes reveals the most about the bearer/wearer/caretaker of it. There is often no ambiguity in the message the crest reveals–clan affiliation, personal identity, and Tlingit cosmology. In cases where the crest represents an animal, Jonaitis notes that "[t]he crest animal embodies all that man controls; it is the visual symbol of the social order" (Jonaitis 1986: 88). Additionally, Jonaitis notes that the "Tlingit, who organized themselves into hierarchies, organized their artworks into hierarchies as well. In their ranking of headgear, conical hats assumed a high position on the scale, whereas beaded caps and frontlets were rather lower. As for costumes, only the most elite could wear the high status Chilkat blankets, while lesser individuals donned les significant costumes like button blankets" (Jonaitis 1986: 98).

The extension of animal influence presented within the form and design of the button (blanket) robes was suggested to me by Roby Littlefield. She noted that the buttons that create the single or double line along the border of the button robe (see FIGURE 53), might suggest octopus tentacles. Looking into this further, the octopus,

[102] Worl notes "Spirits live in the supernatural and natural world. They are embodied in ceremonial objects, and the Tlingit are required to treat them as their kin" (Worl 1998: 83).

also more commonly referred to as the *náakw* (devilfish/octopus), is found in Tlingit cosmology. From my research, the *náakw* (devilfish/octopus) was most commonly used and claimed as clan crest in the *Yéil* (Raven) moiety. In my exposure to button (blanket) robes only one possessed an octopus crest (Olson 1991: 37). The mother-of-pearl buttons are used to mimic the shape of the suckers on the tentacles (known as *a óot'i*, or its suckers), and this might suggest the relationship that Littlefield was able to share with me. Beyond button (blanket) robes the repetitive pattern of the circular suckers from the tentacles appears on shaman rattles (see the Eugene Thaw Collection at the Fenimore Museum, Cooperstown, NY). The devilfish, according to Jonaitis:

> Growing up to seven meters in diameter, the octopus has powerful tentacles with larger six to seven centimeter suckers that can tear a man's skin […]. An animal as odd as this […] is bound to be thought of as magical (Jonaitis 1986: 93).

In terms of the devilfish suckers as an artistic motif, Jonaitis did not make mention of this in her comprehensive work, but rather referenced the use of suckers as an artistic motif in relation to depicting the skeletal shape similar to a backbone in crest animals. The octopus did, however, feature on a button (blanket) robe as a clan crest where the blanket was created and brought out a ceremony as a shaming exercise.

In all of the button (blanket) robes that I experienced through learning of their creation by their makers, the use of double-row buttons was not systematically done. This is not to say that this feature found on a creature considered magical was not by extension adopted as a design element on button (blanket) robes to further enhance their enchantment ability on the beholder and the wearer. In some instances, such as button (blanket) robes from Angoon, the older robes, three rows of buttons were common. On new robes that used new materials and capture the innovation of a

younger generation, buttons are sewed (or glued) on in various patterns, some in a single row with larger buttons and greater spacing, some in two/pair groupings with spaces, and some in just a single row.

FIGURE 53. Button Blanket (T0531a-d). 2012. Thaw Collection. Fenimore Museum, Cooperstown, NY. Photograph taken with permission by Fiona P. McDonald

FIGURE 54. North Pacific giant octopus, underside. © Kike Calvo. Image used with permission by Wildscreen (USA)

Conclusion

Through my research on button (blanket) robes, I have encountered numerous types of transformed woollen blankets in museum collections, on display in art galleries, at fundraising dance events in Southeast Alaska, in archived photographs, and most notably "in action" at both secular and ceremonial events. Simply stated, my study of woollen blankets in Southeast Alaska has captured how the material, spiritual, social, and cosmological relations between Tlingit people and *things* has existed in the development of regalia that at one time used woollen blankets.

Extant data emerged in studying the transformations—past and present—of woollen blankets in Southeast Alaska that marked out new understandings around the

shifting social customs of the production of regalia, as well as shifting values from clan to private property. Additionally, while it was the ethnographic record with button (blanket) robes accessioned in museum collections around the world that made visible to me the use of woollen blankets in Tlingit culture, what emerged was the innovation of material adaptation from woven cloaks such as Chilkat and Raven's Tail robes, to robes made with woollen trade blankets, to contemporary synthetic materials replacing woollen blankets to lighten the weight and enhance the performability of dance regalia. "Once appreciated as indexes of agency, iconic objects" button (blanket) robes "occupy positions in the networks of human social agency that are almost equivalent to the positions of humans themselves" (Thomas 1998: x).

The design structure of button (blanket) robes is thoroughly enmeshed in and with Tlingit cosmology (relates to Munn 1966: 236). I argue therefore, that the woollen blanket itself as a material *thing* has become invisible technically, as well as materially, inconsequential to the social function of button (blanket) robes in Tlingit culture today. What is more important is that the woollen blanket was used as a material to create a type of cultural heritage that was used to perform and maintain Tlingit identity, cultural practices of reciprocity, and inheritance. The woollen blanket was a space or a surface upon which Tlingit culture is impressed and made visible. The fact that a woollen blanket as a woollen textile had a relative legibility in relation to the existing Chilkat and Raven's Tail robes in that it performed the same function of wrapping, was critical. That it offered a space upon which to translate identity through the application of clan crests is critical. But, as time has shown, new materials have entered to take on the function of performing culture through regalia and made the woollen blanket obsolete. The button (blanket) robe therefore becomes the *button robe*, where its

function as a robe remains, its celebration of the buttons that outline clan crests is paramount, but the material from which the robe was historically made is no longer relevant or collectively forgotten. The closest relationship I can draw to this observation relates to Paul Connerton's "Seven Types of Forgetting" (Connerton 2008). The sixth type, 'forgetting as planned obsolescence' is somewhat relevant. But on the whole no key theoretical argument relates to parallel the collective cultural admittance of talking about a material. In this sense I would suggest that this forms a new type of forgetting that has more to do with decolonising hard-edged colonial materials by Indigenous groups.

Returning to Nora Marks Dauenahuer's poem, the use of woollen blankets to map kinship, identity, tradition, cultural heritage, customary art practices, and identity in relation to past and present is remarkably complex. The shifting value of the *button robe* makes visible the ever-changing relevance and irrelevance of materials. What becomes visible is the now invisibility of woollen blankets in Tlingit art and regalia as the *button robe* continues on as a technology of enchantment with new materials moving in to replace woollen blankets and enhance the enchanting qualities of performing ones identity for fellow Tlingit and their ancestors.

CHAPTER 4

THE (TRANSFORMED) WOOLLEN BLANKET AS MNEMONICON AND META-SIGN

"While the physical is a point of departure,
it is the intangible that gives meaning to the object"
—Rose Slivka, *Craftsmakers and Artist*[103]—

Mnemonicon

Here, 'following materials' (Ingold 2012: 435) has been the physical point of departure to reaching a deeper understanding of the intangible personal and cultural meanings of *things* in a larger material-scape of our current ethnographic present. This chapter draws together all three varied types of creative human actions upon woollen blankets in art, craft, and Indigenous cultural property presented in the previous three chapters to look more completely at the range of meanings and conceptual metaphors that emerge from the combined synaesthetic[104] and cultural experiences with transformed woollen blankets. These meanings are deeply woven into the intangible value of woollen blankets, and it is the human interactions of makers and viewers that enliven them. As Jean Baudrillard said, "[t]hings fold and unfold and are concealed, [and] appear when needed" (Baudrillard 2005: 15). The study of metaphors in this chapter, then, is about unfolding the meanings that have been folded into them over time in order to see how metaphors map experiences within our material world. This chapter adds to the larger anthropological discourse around metaphors in culture by arguing

[103] Cf. M. Anna Fariello (2011: 40).
[104] There are two spelling variants for this phenomenon of the union and blending of the sense. I chose to use synaesthetic rather than synesthetic, as both are a derivative of the synaesthesia.

that, as a 'technology of enchantment', a woollen blanket is also a 'mnemonicon' with metaphoric value—an iconic material with metaphoric quality; that is, a device that aids memory that is both individual and collective. As Paul Connerton notes:

> [C]ertain words previously employed by writers in English cease to be used and are no longer easily recognizable: memorous (memorable), memorious (having a good memory), memorist (one who prompts the return of memories), mnemonize (to memorize), mnemonicon (a device to aid the memory) (cf. Casey 1987: 5-6) (Connerton 2008: 64).

Therefore the woollen blanket in both transformed and untransformed states (or forms) is the mnemonicon and the maker who carried out the creative human action to reflect local aesthetics is the memorist. Metaphors create the connection between lived experiences and our material world that result from either a shared understanding or through the juxtaposition of binary opposites.

Having mapped the microsocialities of memorists (or the localities of makers) in which woollen blankets have circulated and have been creatively transformed in North America and Aotearoa New Zealand, the presentation of my primary data thus far has made discernible the numerous social relations that coalesce around *things* in the social contexts of contemporary art, contemporary craft, and Indigenous regalia. Judy Attfield, like C.A. Bayly (1986) notes, "fabric mediates the relationships between individual beings and the act of being in the world at the most intimate level of social relations" (Attfield 2000: 77). Further to this, Bruno Latour wrote, "the material [and we can look at this as textiles or fabric] is not just 'a carrier' of different types of symbols, but an active element in the practices" of everyday life (cf. Hitchins and Jones 2004: 3). Therefore, this chapter takes up Martin Holbraad's model of "thinking through things", in this case the woollen blankets, to trace out how others use woollen blankets to think through the making of meaning and metaphors.

Metaphors speak to the possibilities of materials, and woollen blankets evoke much when they are seen, touched, imagined, and spoken about. According to Marius Kwint "[e]vocation implies an open dialogue between the object, the maker and the consumer in constructing meaning" (Kwint 1999: 3). If we take Roland Barthes idea of the punctum, the thing that wounds the beholder of a photograph, what is the 'material punctum' that evokes a reaction through looking, touching, feeling, hearing, knowing, and transforming woollen blankets by both the makers and consumers (either passive or intentional). As an anthropologist, my own sensory experiences with the woollen blankets in art galleries, craft markets, and Indigenous cultural events allowed me to become more aware of the physical and visual textures, sensations, and smells of woollen blankets that arouse personal metaphors of my own (Stoller 1997: xv). As Jeremy Coote, Chris Morton, and Julia Nicholson articulate in *Transformations: The Art of Recycling* (2000):

> The range of values and meanings are far more diverse than the range of processes. The latter are limited by the nature of the material world and the technical and physical ability of humans to manipulate it. Values and meanings, by contrast are virtually limitless: humans can find all sorts of values and meanings in anything and everything. Values and meanings also change over time and from place to place (Coote *et al.* 2000: 29).

This range of values and meanings becomes manifest in the metaphors people use to evoke a connection to their own lived experience in this material world (Tilley 2000; Weiner & Schneider 1989; Hoskins 1998; Morphy 2006: 315; Manquet 1986: 180). Emblems and symbols are powerful in the making of metaphors as the stories and narratives that give rise to the conceptual metaphor. Anthropologist Dan Montieth noted to me in conversation about his own work in Southeast Alaska, "narratives are metaphors for understanding the world." It is therefore accepted universally that

metaphors and symbols are culturally distinct and are represented that way in this chapter (Womack 2005) in relation to each specific artwork, craft item, or piece of Tlingit regalia.

At the front end of the research presented in this chapter, the woollen blanket has appeared to be used as a metaphor in the following ways (Table 10):

TABLE 10. List of Metaphors

METAPHORS
Ancestor/Ancestral Agency
Birth
Childhood/Youth (nostalgia)
Colonisation
Comfort
Community
Consumption
Death
Disease
Family
Gift / Economies
Heritage
Home
Identity (personal, cultural, national) or sense of belonging
Land
Love
Prestige (and preciousness)
Protection
Warmth
Wealth

Most of these metaphors are addressed at various points throughout this chapter and to a relative degree extend from a corporeal experience with woollen blankets that has enabled the transformations of them and future imaginings of what woollen blankets can do.

To start with one example, comfort, this is the most heavily utilised metaphor

across all field sites. In the context of comfort, acting as a sort of conduit metaphor, the woollen blanket might even possess the power as a *hemlich* – something homely that carries connotations of "cosy, private, secret, future" (Kemp & Schultz 2000: 93). I argue that the metaphor of comfort is the most basic meaning of the woollen blanket that enables future imagining of blankets in general. This "homely" element is overtly brought forth in our contemporary circumstances around gender and domesticity, as well as economics and craft markets. Jo Keith, whose work was presented in Chapter Two, acknowledges the emotional connection where she relates the blanket to metaphors of childhood and home—these equate to comfort for her. Again, recalling Kwint's argument above about the connection between maker-material-viewer, Keith recalled to me that she was born in the mid-1960s in Aotearoa New Zealand, and that she grew up with a woollen blanket on her bed. "It is familiar," Keith states "for Kiwis of my generation, they can all relate to it." She then said that their response is generally "Oh my god, I had that blanket on my bed!" Keith indicates these experiences from her exchanges with clients to her gallery that it created a shared memory with the metaphor of childhood through the woollen blanket. Hayley Lowe also expressed this same shared childhood connection people have to the woollen blanket on their beds in Aotearoa New Zealand, and expressed the benefit the nostalgic role the woollen blanket has as a mnemonicon for positive sales of her creations.

Gregory Bateson once noted that "[a] metaphor retains unchanged the relationship which it illustrates, while substituting other things or persons for relata" (Bateson 2006: 84). On this note George Lakoff and Mark Johnson rightly clarify that a "[m]etaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially

what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness. These endeavours of the imagination are not devoid of rationality; since they use metaphor, they employ an imaginative rationality" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 193).

Turning to Attfield again here, whose work rather unexpectedly influences the theoretical reflections presented in this chapter, as her argument for the use of metaphor to understand a *thing* like a woollen blanket is applicable. She writes:

> Metaphor has been selected rather than any other figure of speech specifically because it does not operate at the level of literal descriptive explanation, refusing any form of essentialism or crude realism that attempts to reduce all things to provable categories of set universal properties. Metaphor allows things to exist in their own thing-like terms merely framing them in a language for discursive purposes without lapsing into solipsism (Attfield 2000: 129).

Therefore, a metaphor allows the plurality of material sensory experiences with woollen blankets that are concomitant across field sites. Throughout the rest of this chapter specific examples of metaphor references will be presented as my argument shows how the metaphoric value of a woollen blanket as a mnemonicon has moved toward a more global understanding of the woollen blanket as a meta-sign.

Mutability and Mystification through action, touch, and sight

At the outset, I acknowledge that the "rhetoric of vision", as Matti Bunzl notes in *Time and the Other* (2002), is the "privileged metaphor of a scientific anthropology" (Bunzl 2002: xiii). In my research I have tried to systematically balance and incorporate data from the aural and oral along with the visual, but also acknowledge that vision, through observation, was the prioritised sense. There are many examples in this research where the mutability of the woollen blanket allows for the senses to create

an experience of mystification that comes through the opportunity to work with and experience materials. Let's start with an example of a maker metaphor to emerge from woollen blankets. The maker metaphor is not a metaphor evoked from the woollen blanket, but rather one that traces out actions as metaphoric gestures inspired by the materials.

In conversation with Canadian artist Liz Magor (see Chapter One for FIGURE 19 and APPENDIX 8) concerning her artistic practice involving woollen blankets, I was curious as to how she interacts with her materials. This line of inquiry had stemmed from a previous conversation I had had with Seneca artist Maria Watt (FIGURES 26 and 27) where she had articulated a clear experience in her *oeuvre* with woollen blankets where she was now able to move beyond the metaphors of comfort and warmth, and use the materials beyond their form as a woollen blanket to expand her practice into wall-works. The conversation between Magor and myself showed how she was looking for a metaphor to describe her working creative process with woollen blankets:

> **Magor:** I mean it is active. But performative to me means that you have an audience as you are doing those actions.
> **McDonald:** OK
> **Magor:** And I'm not thinking of an audience. I'm in a process.
> **McDonald:** OK. That is a good clarification for me
> [*reference to performance was a response as I had misunderstood earlier*]
> **Magor:** OK. So. I'm active and I'm in process and the process is intellectual, it's technical, its historic. I'm processing all of those things simultaneously. So … and … and … and I try to let the process follow the material intelligence of this. Not me.
> [*Magor picks up a pink/blue blanket from a large table in her studio*].
> **McDonald:** OK.
> **Magor:** So … ummm … I try to be … to push myself back or down or be uhh … I try to be sensitive … [*Magor laughs*] instead of ummm directional. You get to be the actor and not the director in a way. And the lings [*Magor points to the warp and weft on the pink/blue woollen blanket in her hand*].
> [Pause and quiet]
> **Magor:** I am just trying out this metaphor.
> **McDonald:** No…that is good.

> **Magor:** [*Patting the woollen blanket that she has placed back on her studio work table*] This is the script. And I'm the actor and I'm seeing the blanket and wondering what the script of this blanket is. What is its story? You know?
> **McDonald:** [*Prompting question*] The object's narrative?
> **Magor**: Not the narrative that it belonged to Mrs. Smith.
> **McDonald:** OK.
> **Magor:** The narrative is a material narrative.

Like Magor's cognitive work with a metaphor to understand her creative process, the metaphors that emerge from the works of art she creates are equally as complex. Larger concerns with the ever-shifting metaphoric, cultural, economic, and aesthetic value(s) of materials and processes, when coupled with an interest in the materiality of things and their narratives, are really at the core of this chapter. In particular, how the sensory effects of materials enable the creation of metaphors. The study of metaphors and materials has occupied a rich discourse in anthropology for several reasons. First, by understanding relevant value(s) and associated cultural meanings of objects such as woollen blankets, we gain primary anthropological insight into what motivates cultural producers, craftspeople, and artists within distinct cosmological frames to consciously transform materials for aesthetic, visual, sensual, and tangible outcomes. And second, we move deeper in order to know how materials perform as technologies of enchantment, devices, and mnemonicons.

Muruška Svašek's work, *Anthropology: Art and Culture Production* (2007), brings together some key ideas from Claude Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist school of thought around consumption practices of material culture presented by Daniel Miller that relate here. As a bridge to the discussion about cultural production as material culture, considering how the mutability of the woollen blanket creates a portal through sensory experiences to materials is paramount to numerous discussions on

material culture and metaphors. For example, Svašek uses Howard Morphy's perspective to discuss sensory experiences by quoting that "[t]he physical properties [of an object] have an effect on the senses, but it is the process of aesthetic transformation that gives value to a property, a value that often becomes associated with an emotional response" (Svašek 2007: 35). Materiality in this example is connected to an emotional response that evokes a cognitive relationship between body and material.

A blanket, in this case a woollen blanket, is something many of us have had a visceral and embodied experience with. There is a shared sensorial experience most have with blankets no matter what their material makeup. All taxonomies of blankets (hide, wool, cotton, synthetic fibres, etc.) are generally associated with a sense of survival (primal instinct) that evokes a common sensorial experience of warmth and protection. Woollen blankets, comprised of raw wool that has been systematically washed, dyed, carded, and fulled (or brushed), produced in the United Kingdom and France since shortly before the seventeenth century is no exception (FIGURE 1). The woollen blankets presented in this material ethnography may vary in size, colour, and patterning, but historically they have always had the same essentialised woollen materiality. To the touch of the hand or other more sensitive and receptive parts of the body where a woollen blanket may touch, the material essence of manufactured woollen blankets is that they are: thick, itchy, textured by the warp and weft weave, hard to tear yet malleable to grip fiercely, soft, and heavy. These are the physical properties that I sense in relation to woollen blankets, qualities that inform its manufacture and have sustained its presence in varied contexts as either serviceable or utilitarian objects.

I turn now to unpack only the two senses of looking and touching as they relate to people in various social contexts where metaphors for woollen blankets make sense.[105]

In sensing the woollen blankets through the visual in various contexts, I observed the space where the conception of new forms and objects comes into being through creative human action as localised aesthetic transformative actions on *things*. Holbraad *et al* state "[c]onception is a mode of disclosure (of—metaphorical—'vision') that creates its own objects, just because it is one and the same with them, so to 'see' these objects is to create them." Therefore, to see the woollen blanket from an anthropological perspective is to see the potential for it to take on a new form informed by the metaphorical values ascribed to it and the concept it can become. Tim Ingold's work here might suggest that seeing is also part of the transformation process that allows for the articulation of the subsequent phases of use for materials where meaning is found (Ingold 2013). But seeing is culturally informed and culturally specific. For example, Tlingit clan member, Catrina Mitchell, of the *Daishetaan* clan (see Chapter Three, FIGURE 49 and FIGURE 50) referenced to me the primacy of the visual experience when remembering her own button robe when she noted to me her first memory of the robe as being "when I first took this robe into my eyes."

[105] There is also the aural evocation that comes with experiencing woollen blankets. In this sense reinforcing my argument of its mnemonicon potential. In 2010 I met through mutual social networks a man by the name of Andy Knight in London, England (a New Zealand ex-pat). During my fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand, Andy happened to be back visiting family and friends. He invited me to meet his mother who had given her woollen blanket to Andy as a young boy when he was in the Boy Scouts—more on this in APPENDIX 5. As we were looking at Andy's Boy Scout blanket, he said to me "you know the first time you told me about your research it was like a whole flood of memories came back to me." As Andy shared this with me he gestures with his hands in a wave like motion over his head. This was a similar experience I had with others during my fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand who were also part of the Girl Guide or Boy Scout movement in most Settler states.

This act and cultural process of seeing and looking is critical to the apprehension of objects and the making of meaning of our material world as it relates to each person's context and cosmological frame. Bruno Latour concisely cites from Svetlana Alpers work on Dutch landscape paintings and visual culture, and in turn her citing the work of seventeenth century Czech educator Comenius. The process of vision, that I would like to apply here, goes as follows:

> We will now speak of the mode in which objects must be presented to the senses, if the impression is to be distinct. This can be readily understood if we consider the process of actual vision. If the object is to be clearly seen it is necessary: (1) that it be placed before the eyes; (2) not far off, but at a reasonable distance; (3) not on one side, but straight before the eyes; and (4) so that the front of the objects be not turned away from, but directed towards the observer; (5) that the eyes first take in the object as a whole; (6) and then proceed to distinguish the parts; (7) inspecting these in order from the beginning to the end; (9) that attention be paid to each and every part; (9) until they are all grasped by means of their essential attributes. If these requisites be properly observed, vision takes place successfully; but if one be neglected its success is only partial. (cited in Alpers, 1983: 95) (cf. Latour 1986: 9).

In the successful apprehension of a whole object, material, or *thing*, understanding it in relation to one's own frames of reference is critical. This reference is where meaning is found in the medium, and concepts of culture might be formed.

Of course, the context of viewing affects the sensory and aesthetic experience so as to witness from all sides, more on that in the next section. First I want to pause to reflect upon the idea of the concept of objects through visual apprehension. In order to do so, I wish to momentarily abduct Marshall McLuhen's idea of *The Medium is the Massage* (1967) from media studies to material culture studies to suggest that the affect/effects material mediums (what he would call media) have on the sensorium is an integral part or what he calls an "extension" of the senses and sensory responses to

how meaning is made (McLuhen 1967). In this case, how is the woollen blanket an extension of human experience between maker and viewer that contains the message (or a concept) to create a metaphor? Ivan Gaskell and Salim Kemal suggest that in such an instance "[t]he viewer attends to the material, to be sure, but sees it as a medium, and attending to the material as medium does not exclude grasping the represented object" (Kemal & Gaskell 1993: 3). Through all of this, seeing the object in whole as well as in its parts is paramount.

To go beyond seeing how the woollen blanket is the medium, the concept, and the metaphor, I turn here to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work on metaphors to look at the woollen blanket in relation to their 'objectivist view' in order to address the potential of a woollen blanket as a concept, once modifiers are added to blanket. Lakoff and Johnson note, "a metaphor works when it satisfies a purpose, namely understanding an aspect of the concept" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 97). In this theoretical action of making meaning, how we interpret the intangible qualities and meanings of woollen blankets (*things*, objects, etc) shifts. For example, if we parallel an example from *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) we can look at the gun that they then add the qualifiers of black and fake to. If we add modifiers of colour, shape, texture, and design such as black and fake to woollen blanket, black adds a quality (or what Lakoff & Johnson call "property") to the blanket, whereas fake disqualifies its existence and, possibly, diminishes the value of a woollen blanket. These qualitative properties fail to illuminate what the blanket *is* but they do move closer toward framing the blanket as a concept with metaphoric value. But how does a term like "fake" modify blanket? In the context of a blanket as opposed to a gun, a "fake woollen blanket" has more to do with authenticity as it no longer serves the

function of prestige of being from a specific place or manufacturer. In this case, fake does not 'negate' its function therefore the metaphors of warmth, protection, and comfort can still persist (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 121). Lakoff and Johnson's critical ideas show the way modifiers affect the concept of an object that in turn offers insight into how metaphors are used to mediate understanding of people's lived experiences in the material world. If "fake" affects the concept of objects, or the conception of a woollen blanket, what then are the metaphorical and qualitative dimensions of the woollen blanket that it "preserves" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 121) in its value and conception? "Fake," then, serves the same function of warmth, protection, and as a covering (this would be Lakoff's "Motor Activity"), it can still serve as a gift or item of exchange and barter in a historical sense, or as a material for artistic intervention and transformation (Lakoff's "Functional"). But by adding "fake" to any woollen blanket negates the authenticity and prestige that is indicated by the label on the blanket (in this sense, it would fail Lakoff's "Purposive" property where it serves some other purpose apart from being a blanket, in this sense a sign of prestige). So what is important is that "perceptual, motor-activity, and purposive properties are […] not inherent in [blankets] themselves. Instead, they have to do with the way we interact with [blankets]" (Lakoff & Thomson 1980: 121). This is critical here when looking at the metaphorical interactions with woollen blankets. Lakoff writes:

> "This indicates that the concept [woollen blanket], as people actually understand it, is at least partly defined by interactional properties having to do with perception, motor activity, purpose, function, etc. Thus we find that our concepts of objects, like our concepts of events and activities are characterizable as multidimensional gestalts whose dimensions emerge naturally from our experience in the world" (Lakoff & Thomson 1980: 121-122).

The transformation of woollen blankets *is* part of the material sensory experience that emerged in this study—of both maker (memorist) and viewer. Take, for example, some contemporary artworks discussed at length in Chapter One, where the woollen blankets form communities of making where material engagements are actively carried out through Sewing Circles (Watt), collective Workshops for Production (Williams), and Sewing Actions (Decter). These forums make visible the physical labour involved in literally transforming woollen blankets and how one could interpret an added labour-value based on the work contributed by individuals foregrounding the social relations that can and do coalesce around this single material object. The resonance of their practices draws attention to earlier work by Joseph Beuys, whose own practice with felted materials drew upon the idea of 'social sculptures' where "art should be participatory and has the power to effect transformation in the self and society" (Berlo 2005: 35).

In both Watt and Decter's work (respectively FIGURES 27 and 20), for example, the boundary between looking and touching are dismantled in the generative act of making (the object and meaning). In many works with woollen blankets that are exhibited within institutional settings such as art galleries and museums, only the artist has had the physical ability to touch the material during the transformation and where it is eventually set within a gallery or museum context on exhibit and at a distance, thus removing woollen blankets from the "aesthetic-cultural complex" of making, using, touching, knowing (Phillips 2002: 63), or, rather, alienating it from its functional value. As Ruth Phillips incisively noted in her work in Indigenous cultural heritage on exhibition in museums:

> [T]he processes of fragmentation and selection and the privileging of the visual upon which both are based leave behind the richest and fullest meanings associated with these objects, meanings that reside in the absent contexts of performance, ritual, narrative, dance, song, smell, spatiality, memory, and individual human relationships" (Phillips 2002: 63).

This difficulty of access, Alfred Gell has suggested, can enhance the value of an object (Gell 1998: 48).

In the making of their work and bringing to the fore the material experiences intrinsic to work and removing this at a distance looking to active touching to create various other forms of social value, Watt, Williams (FIGURE 29), and Decter, to cite just three examples here, invited others to touch, engage, sew, and thus create a social space for relations to coalesce around materials. For example, Decter notes that her Sewing Actions permitted more of an informal yet socialised haptic experience with the woollen blankets and text. Decter states:

> These nodes of interchange are charged with haptic and interpersonal proximity. Looking through the books clears a private portal for reflection. The character of each written response is signaled not only in the words but also through the hand of the writer—the form of the letters, the pressure of the pen on paper, the placement of the text on the page. The very notion of a "blanket" suggests a closeness that can both comfort and obscure. In viewing the textile piece one is aware of the idiosyncratic materiality of the second-hand blankets that construct it. Patterns and degrees of wear, imperfections, and even the lingering odors evoke familiar utility and the nearness of unknown inter-narratives. The act of sewing recasts the viewer as participant, bringing them into closer proximity with the blankets, each other, the statement, and the responses (Decter 2012: 168).

This idea of transitional objects is noteworthy in my study about the mnemonic value a blanket has to childhood. As Watt states: "My work explores human stories and rituals implicit in everyday objects. I am interested in wool blankets and their heirloom-like quality. Freud considered blankets as 'transitional' objects, but I like to consider how

these humble pieces of cloth are *transformational*" (Watt cited in Dobkins 2012: 72). Added to Watt's reference to the blanket as 'transitional' are Attfield's reflections upon Donald Winnicott's work in *Playing and Reality* (1971) where it is further elucidated that the 'transitional object' "is the corner of a child's blanket which the infant uses as a transitional device with which to negotiate the separation from the mother" (Attfield 2000: 77).

While a lengthy excerpt, Attfield concisely captures the way materials help to mediate inner-self and outer-world. She writes:

> Textile objects in the form of clothes and soft furnishings, comfort blankets and carpets, are made of a particular type of material in two senses of the word—the physical and the cultural. There is a generalisation, a truism even, of all artefacts—things made by means of human thought and hand. But it is the specifically material properties of textiles as an interpretive tool, represented in the transition object that differentiates it from other kinds of things. Thus textiles present a particularly opposite object type to illustrate how things are used to mediate the interior mental world of the individual, the body, and the exterior objective world beyond the self through which a sense of identity is constructed and transacted within social relations (Attfield 2000: 123).

These social relations are context bound as well. The locality of the transformative acts also reflects the specific metaphors drawn out that are culturally and historically specific to Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Metaphors, Meanings, and the Woollen Blanket

Circling back to Arthur Danto, whose work was discussed in Chapter One, he noted that, "[t]ransformations [of materials] in the practice of art in recent decades has made […] meanings available to artists in realising works that draw on the meanings fabric possesses in vernacular forms of life" (Danto 2002: 84). These meanings are part of the metaphoric value impressed upon materials. Over time,

meanings change and shift to reflect both cultural and personal values. As Susan M. Pearce notes, "[t]he pre-conceptual frameworks (epistemes) through which our culture orders the material and social worlds have changed through time and are themselves specific to each time and culture. This affects not merely the interpretation of evidence, or the articulation of subjective influences with material data, but the very fabric of their understanding" (Pearce 1997: 29). Of course, the conceptual work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live* By (1974) grounds how we think about time, space, and relationality. Therefore I prefer to suggest that we look at the qualitative values that metaphors have as sites of meaning in relation to creativity. In the context of my ethnography, creativity and creative human actions upon the material world have been the central focus where transformed woollen blankets are experienced in art galleries, secular and ceremonial Indigenous events, as well as craft markets, shops, museums, homes, studios, and other private and public spaces.

Arguably context affects one's sensory experience, or the types of sensory experiences that are permitted by the proximity to the material. For example, if the transformed woollen blanket is in a gallery and set at a distance, only looking is permitted. Yet in craft markets, touching and looking are acceptable forms of sensory engagement with objects made from transformed woollen blankets. This sensory engagement with the creatively transformed woollen blankets is the space that allows for the articulation of metaphors, meanings, and values that bind the maker and consumer. As Matthew B. Crawford argues in *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An inquiry into the value of work* (2009), "[c]reativity is what happens when people are liberated from the constraints of conventionality" (Crawford 2009: 51). This freedom is reflected in Mari Womack's idea that creativity erupts (Womack 2005). However, if, as Ingold

suggests, an "artefact is a materialisation of thought", then I argue that a creative thought to a certain degree is informed by the makers' experience with the materials, and in how their relationship to the metaphors the materials evoke and elicit experiences in others. Along this thread of thinking, Jacques Manquet's arguments relating to the aesthetic experience becomes relevant in the shared experience with materials and metaphors. He notes "[y]et the creator and beholder are not isolated from one another. With nothing in common. Between them is a communion, a participation in corresponding experiences. The creator, when shaping the forms, and the beholder, when looking at them, have corresponding experience" (Manquet 1986: 158). In this communion of shared participation there is a shared knowing of the physical properties of the woollen blanket—itchy, scratching, woollen, warm, dense—which opens up the space for the articulation of the qualitative or metaphoric qualities.

How is meaning made through the sensory synaesthetic, experience with woollen blankets? What is the sentient material experience with woollen blankets? The sensory experience of our material world is dependent upon perceptual cognition and the ability for one's mind to apprehend a *thing* with or through the senses. To answer these questions, ideas around the haptic are an integral part of the blending together a deeper understanding of a multisensorial experience by starting with the idea of touching (the material) with the eye (Howes 2014). As art historian John Potvin notes, "[t]he haptic experience marks the territory where we might negotiate the world of objects, of things, of people" (Potvin 2007: 93). This is a critical space to how we interact with our material world, and remains a valuable site of inquiry to

understanding further the entanglement of sensory and emotional, or metaphoric, responses to woollen blankets. If we look at sight briefly, David Graber writes that:

> Walter Ong (1977:121-144) […] suggested that it is in the nature of vision always to suggest a beyond, something unseen. Eyes take in only the surfaces of things. To tell if a coin is gold or merely gilded, you don't stare at it: you bite it, weight it on the palm, or rap it to hear the sound. Looking at a thing, according to Ong, is always looking at a mere fraction of a thing, and the viewer is always at least vaguely aware that there is something further underneath (Graeber 2001: 106).

Often sight of an object is reassertion of things at a distance that increases the value of an object—seeing but not touching (Gell 1998). I would add that to the beholder who can see the material form—either in it is original state or transformed—that interest resides (and here is where the technology enchants) in attempting to know what is beyond just looking as a limited sense to seek something more comprehensive that stems from looking to touching as part of their embodied and corporeal experience as material beings in a material world (Phillips 2012).

Moving from sight back to touch. Touch brings a deeper knowing of an object that illuminates a closer understanding of a material's potential and thus allows for imagining a futurity of the woollen blanket. Again, I restate my argument that metaphors allow for the futurity of materials. "Our memories are located within the mental and material spaces of the group" writes Paul Connerton, and it is the combination of seeing and touching that deepens and evokes the metaphors associated with woollen blankets (Connerton 1989: 37).

For example, exhibition reviewer, R.M. Vaughn, writes about Liz Magor's work discussed in Chapter One (see APPENDIX 8 for images of this work), that:

> Magor sets the blankets' connotations of comfort and reassurance against the actual, distressed surfaces of the blankets, and thus the surfaces subsequently suggest disruption and incompleteness. And she does it all so

> quietly, it's creepy. As a lifelong insomniac, I read the blankets as a metaphor for troubled sleep – everything necessary to permit a comforting nap is still present in the blankets (softness, density, soothing colours), but the small imperfections nag at the viewer, much the same way small noises or prickly worries pester light sleepers. And don't get me started on my fear of bedbugs (Vaughn 2011).

The other metaphors and experiences that are anchored in the haptic experience of sight and touch were extremely evident within craft markets in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Observing the experience market-goers had with woollen blankets within craft markets was often the result of a surprise on their part—or a haptic experience (Dahn 2011: 167). What I mean here is, in most instances I noted that casual browsing from stall to stall at craft markets offered up the opportunity for the unexpected. Upon seeing a woollen blanket in a new form and out of context from its historically familiar serviceable function was often initiated by sight, the common reaction of "I know this stuff" evinced further responses to its metaphoric value and sensory qualities. In the context of the craft market "seeing the woollen blanket" was coupled with the opportunity to touch. Feeling, touch, sensing in an embodied or corporeal way was not restricted within this social context but rather encouraged by the memorist maker where their item—the hot water bottle cover, the lamp shade or the cushion—was the mnemonicon device that elicited reaction, conversation, and often a sale.

In the case of Tlingit button robes, the sensory experience is more complex. For example, it is the beholder who looks at a distance, but it is the wearer, the dancer, who has an embodied experience of touching and being with that material. Together, the witness and performer—those looking and those touching—create a shared haptic experience that is better understood, perhaps as a liminal space within the context of performing Tlingit self, ancestors, culture, identity, and an aesthetic experience. There

is another layer of sight and touch that affects the experience with Tlingit button robes. As Attfield notes, "the personal experiences associated with garments infiltrates the fabric, not to transform the garment but to change the user's practice" (Attfield 2000: 148). This is important to the way one Tlingit individual told me: "When you wear the robe your actions go into the robe. There is a responsibility that comes with wearing the robe—a responsibility to our community and to our ancestors." This was buttressed in another context where a young Tlingit man said to me "a name is like a blanket. When you put that blanket on your conduct remains in that blanket." In sharing this with me, the intangible traces of honourable actions that respect that *at.óowu* (name or regalia) are palpable in Tlingit culture. This is integral to Tlingit culture to perform according to Tlingit protocols where metaphors have a lesson.

Metaphor to Meta Sign and the Multivalent Woollen Blanket

The woollen blanket is multivalent as Chapters One, Two, and Three have demonstrated. As a result of the fecundity of various makers in divergent social contexts, it is a material *thing* that has been and continues to be susceptible to multiple cultural, personal, historical, and contemporary interpretations that inform a greater understanding of the meanings and values impressed upon woollen blankets. In this case, calling the woollen blanket a meta-sign is what moves the discussion of woollen blankets beyond just a metaphor (Quinn 1994). Rather its status as a meta-sign allows the meanings derived from the metaphors impressed upon blankets and the narratives that encircle it to give it new meaning in both its manufactured and transformed states. This allows for the imagined futurity of the woollen blanket.

A few more examples of the metaphors extended from woollen blankets here are used to transition to talking about the meta-sign.

Metaphor of identity recovery and souvenir. As a memorist/maker, Aotearoa New Zealand artist Laura Marsh created a work from a woollen blanket produced by the Mosgiel Woollen Company (see Chapter One for history of this mill). Her creative transformation of this found and ready-made material captures the cultural knowledge that informs how this *thing* is a mnemonicon of her history and a device to understanding her present (FIGURE 55).

FIGURE 55. *Bluff*. 2009. Laura Marsh. Found blanket, invisible thread. 205 x 124 cm. Image courtesy the artist and available at, http://lauramarshartist.blogspot.co.nz/ (last accessed 12 February 2012)

In her art, Marsh addresses meaning around her own personal history:

> *Bluff* came about in 2009 after a road trip with my Mother and Grandmother to places in Southland that have significance to my family history. The journey culminated in a visit to Mum's birth town, Bluff, (a name I've always thought humorous, and at the time was telling of my feelings towards how I was progressing through my Postgrad Dip year!) On a previous trip to The South Island I had purchased a woollen Mosgiel

> blanket from an op-shop; when I was a child my paternal Grandparents had lived in Mosgiel (a small town 20mins South of Dunedin, though the Mosgiel Woollen Co. is long gone). I reconfigured the rug into a banner, the material alluding to the significance of wool to my culture, and of course the form alluding to the fateful moments of Pakeha trading blankets for Māori land. Bringing these elements together in one piece solidifies a moment; catching the experience of a series of events connected over time, through me, into one form, a souvenir. By collecting these fragments of my personal, ancestral and cultural past together in a tangible form, *Bluff* creates a feeling of 'definitely' being part of this cultural landscape for me, disrupting the feelings of dislocation that I was attempting to address […] (http://lauramarshartist.blogspot.com/, last accessed 12 February 2012).

Marsh's work in *Bluff* uses the woollen as a mnemonicon to locate herself, her identity, and her future specifically within the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Metaphor for consumerism. Looking further at woollen blankets as metaphors of emotion of belonging is also pronounced in the work of installation artist Akiko Diegle also in Aotearoa New Zealand. In her collaboration with fellow installation artist Marijon Spree (2009), they used woollen blankets as a medium to address consumerism and objects of the every day. The woollen blankets they purchased from opportunity shops were cut into the shape of plastic shopping bags and installed on the floor of the Tauranga Art Gallery in such a way as to "symbolise the passing of time" and to "exemplify the lost significance of value and labour of production" (artist statement, 2009). In this work they evoke the metaphors of wealth, economics, and globalisation.

> Diegle writes in her artist statement for the artwork "7 x 10":
>
> Blankets serve not only as protection from our physical and emotional anxiety but are also a sign of labour, through their painstaking production, and a physical embodiment of multiple histories, thorough the trading and uses they have been put through in their history. […] Opportunity shops often bring back lost memories. They are places that trigger many emotions including nostalgia, longing[,] and generosity. They are crowded with narratives lined up on shelves, hanging on racks, piled into boxes.

They surround us with lost personal and cultural stories waiting to be told. In buying blankets from opportunity shops, and transforming them into shopping bags […] *7 x 10* attempts to emphasise the sometimes harsh reality of our rapidly changing world. Filled with throwaway culture and disposable mass production causing our lives to become mundane. Shopping bags are a metaphor, which questions the fast-moving and seemingly disposable aspect of many areas of modern life. In the long-term our throwaway disposable society cannot possibly be beneficial to our state of mental health and we, therefore, need to find mechanisms for coping wit the destabilisation we are continuously forced to experience and endure (artist statement, 2009).

FIGURE 56. 7 x 10. 2009. Akiko Diegle. Image Courtesy the Artist

Metaphor for protection. The most explicit evocation of the metaphor of protection is found in Tlingit culture. This extends from the protection, not of self, but of others. Through the transformation of a woollen blanket or woollen textile into a

button robe, the robe becomes metaphorical wings of either the *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) or *Yéil* (Raven) clan and its clan members. For example, when a clan member from an opposite moiety 'walks into the forest' or passes away, the members from the opposite clan gather around the deceased's relatives to offer support in all possible ways. This act is often captured in speeches at a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party) for the deceased held within one year of their passing. During these speeches, guests of the bereaved (the hosts of the party thanking their opposite clan members for taking care of them) reference the button (blanket) robe as such: "we want you to use our wings to catch your tears and then use our wings to wrap around and comfort you" (Marks *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party) 2010). In this speech the orator uses the robe to mimic the action of their clan birds' wings. It was further explained to me by David Katzeek in Alaska when regalia is spread out during a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party), that "the blankets are spread out [on the table] like the wings. It's like that so I can put my arms around you again [at this ceremony] and around your children" as a tangible gesture of protection.

Additionally, the metaphor of protection in relation to the button robe is enacted during several moments during the *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party). Often the aforementioned speech draws a robe into a simile with the wings of a bird as central to the process of the removal of grief—a liminal moment during a *ku.éex'* (memorial ceremony, thank you party) where the grieving ends and joy enters to celebrate and show gratitude for the love and to maintain *wooch yax* (balance, respect, and reciprocity) between the *Ch'áak'* (Eagle) or *Yéil* (Raven) clans and the spirits of the deceased.

Metaphor for land. One final example of the use of woollen blankets and metaphors in Aotearoa New Zealand brings us back to the work of Ngaahina Hohaia (*Parihaka, Ngāti Moeahu, Ngāti Haupoto, Taranaki iwi* (tribe)) (See Chapter One for FIGURE 17) that was first introduced in Chapter One through her work "Roimata Toroa" (Tears of the Albatross). The metaphor that Hohaia evoked relates to the land. The statement for this work from the City Gallery of Wellington states:

> The 100% New Zealand wool blankets from which these poi are constructed are products of the New Zealand economy built on Māori land. Hohaia claims that the dairy industry in Taranaki is founded on over two and a half million acres of confiscated Māori land. For her the blanket stands as a metaphor for the land, but also as a symbol of historical imbalance of wealth and power upon the land" (City Gallery of Wellington, 2009).

In drawing the woollen blanket in as a metaphor for the land, Hohaia, like other artists extend the metaphor to be something more pronounced in relation to cross-cultural colonial experiences. A metaphor moves the woollen blanket to being more of a meta-sign of a global experience. Situating the woollen blanket as an agent or contagion that links it to metaphors of loss and death is evident in the work of Sonny Assu (FIGURES 21, 22, 23) and Rebecca Belmore.

Metaphor for heritage. This is one of the more complicated conceptual or conduit metaphors to extend from the woollen blanket. In all of the field sites in my research project, concepts of heritage are not congruent and therefore have not readily been legible from an anthropological perspective as a shared experience across all field sites. Whose heritage is the core question? In a way, the use of the woollen blanket for heritage needs to be considered in the *way* that a woollen blanket was/is transformed so as to potentially suggest its meaning as an extension of the culture of the maker. Let's recall what Katherine

Morrison, who quilts Petone woollen blankets in Aotearoa New Zealand, noted when curator Helen Kedgley quotes her as saying, "[b]lankets are part of my heritage […] They evoke nostalgia, frugality, austerity[,] and comfort too" (Kedgley 2009: 3). In Alaska, Nora Marks Dauenhauer's poem entitled *Heritage* (1987) indicated the way transformed woollen blankets were used to create tangible pieces of cultural heritage that are integral to Tlingit art and customary practices relating to *at.óowu* (owned or purchased thing, clan property).

In every instance it is critical to consider the cultural perspective of the maker to understand the metaphor they are evoking. In some instances in Chapter One, in particular, a statement was made through the aesthetic transformative act to delineate for most Indigenous artists that a woollen blanket had everything to do with the destruction of their Indigenous culture and heritage. I am thinking here specifically of almost every artist listed in TABLE 2 in North America, especially: Alan Michelson, Bill Powless, Bob Boyer, Bonnie Divine, Jane Ash Poitras, Jim Logan, Jolene Rickard, Keesic Douglas, Kent Monkman, Leah Decter (with Jaimie Isaac), Marianne Coreless, Rebecca Belmore, Robert Houle, Ron Noganosh, Sonny Assu, and Teresa Burrows. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the list of those who use death, colonisation, disease, and loss as metaphors with the woollen blankets are, extracted from TABLE 3: Chelsea Gough, David K. Shields, Hayley Lowe, Jo Torr, Ngaahania Hohaia, Rona Ngahuia Osborne (*Native Agent*), Susan Jowsey, Suzanne Tamaki, Taera Tāne, and Tracey Williams. These are metaphors that draw out a distinctly different sensory response to the woollen blanket that evoke its hard-edge colonial manufacture,

rather than its serviceable functions of warmth and comfort. In these cases the woollen blanket is a metaphor of discomfort.

Heritage is culturally specific and therefore the metaphors are too. The interesting connection to emerge around unpacking metaphors around heritage is the fact that there is a rather anti-heritage message that the woollen blanket as a metaphor evokes around death, colonialism, loss, and disease.

Therefore, moving from metaphors to a meta-sign, the meta-sign, then, is how the woollen blanket, when apprehended in a cognitive way through these sense or senses, participates in an emotional, social, cultural mystification allowing for the polyphony of metaphors to unfold. In a way, a meta-sign allows for social relations to coalesce on a more global and conceptual scale. In this metaphoric unfolding, the metaphors gather and assemble together to give rise and agency to the woollen blanket as a meta-sign of culture, heritage, and identity in distinct social contexts that have a shared history of colonial contact.

Conclusion

The synaesthetic experience of seeing and touching, I argue, is centrally involved as a personal driving force for the creation of metaphorical and imagined meanings applied to woollen blankets across all three field sites, and through all modes of creative human action upon them—cutting, folding, sewing, tearing, burning, unweaving, etc. It is these various sensorial experiences that help make visible the way memory is activated and trusted as a shared experience often within the shared cosmological frame of the maker and viewer (Kwint 1999). To conclude this chapter, I engage with Attfield by inserting my

thoughts into her argument about “the way subjects make connections with their past”. To this I would add the subjects’ connections with their future “is not necessarily articulated but can be” and has been in this material ethnography, “observed in the form of material manifestations” and material transformations “in the construction” and articulation through metaphors “personal material worlds” (Attfield 2000: 223).

CONCLUSION

Having 'Thought Through' Woollen Blankets

This thesis has shown how makers (or memorists) have captured the plurapotentiality of woollen blankets within multiple localised and global spheres of creative activity such as contemporary art, craft, and the making of cultural property for Indigenous regalia. Through transforming woollen blankets, makers have consciously used a complex ready-made material to think through their own lived cultural and corporeal experiences within our material world.

By taking one thing—the industrially produced woollen blanket—as my object of investigation, this thesis brought together a study of aesthetics, materiality, and locality in relation to the woollen blanket to consider it as a possible "technology of enchantment" (Gell 1998) in both its original and transformed states. I did not set out with the intent to fit a woollen blanket into a theoretical frame, but as this thesis demonstrates, I allowed the material and experiences of the makers through either their imagined or embodied lives to inform how materials help expand anthropological understandings of the creation of cultural heritage. Each case study presented in this thesis was used to inform the gap in anthropological literature to look concisely through non-reductive, comparative looking at *how* transformed materials lead to the movement of knowledge and self-conscious production of cultural heritage and knowledge that includes circulation and consumption as part of the transformation process.

I have carried out a systematic analysis of woollen blankets through counter point case studies in relation to metaphors presented in Chapter Four as opposed to a

reductive comparison of field sites. Starting with basic questions of "why a woollen blanket?" and "what is the role of culture heritage today?" that I noted at the outset of this thesis, I expanded my inquiry in order to question more deeply and critically how it is that woollen blankets as mnemonic devices (mnemonicons or meta-sign) assist makers and viewers to navigate biographical and historical relations today.

This research carefully investigated the aesthetic transformations of the woollen blankets into art, craft, and Indigenous cultural property within our current historical moment and within specific abstract and concrete localities in Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the United States. I have shown the way that materials are "surfaces of continual interchange" (Ingold 2013) across history and within distinct cultural contexts. Within Aotearoa New Zealand and North America, transformative creative human action upon woollen blankets have had a sustained presence since their first movement into each culture that shows the creative consumption practices of materials as part of the process of transformation. Ultimately, the woollen blanket is a *thing* that "coexists" within distinct historical moments, cultures, and experiences that is simultaneously past, present, and future (Miller 1987: 107).

I have observed that all items made from transformed woollen blankets such as works of art, to tea cosies, to jackets, to button robes, are imagined from and respond to the everyday realities of the makers and their cosmological frames. These transformations are self-conscious acts upon the material-scape of their current historical moment. This means that material *things*, as they become objects, present new ways of understanding culture through the shifting values that are locally produced and globally connected. As Karen Barard notes, "objects are part of configurations that matter" (Karen Barard 2012, San Francisco).

In this ontological investigation of woollen blankets, the dynamism of multi-vocal and, yet, intensely local uses and transformations of woollen blankets reveal that movement and consumption are together a single transformative act. The knowledge garnered from these creative human acts of transformation is both tangible and intangible. The tangible changes reflect a local aesthetic and the intangible connects to the metaphoric values that draw out the imagined futurity of woollen blankets in their 'renewed' forms against their historical and colonial legacies. The varied values that emerge from distinct aesthetic transformations enable a new reading of the importance of aesthetic and creative manipulations of materials and matter that informs the local take-up of an industrial product. As each chapter illustrated through my presentation of data in specific contexts of use, this thesis pushes beyond a current analytical framework that has considered how objects come to be entangled in local and global meanings through either their social life or biography, by pointing out that the intentionality of the transformations of the materials and matter inform larger critical understandings around the emergence of a global aesthetics fashioned through soft materials that are themselves manifestations of the hard-edged, imperial, colonial, and industrial projects.

The Role of Aesthetics and Technologies of Enchantment

To transform is to materially sublimate—to change from one state to another. As David Graeber notes in a rather obscure footnote, "Hecalitis did not deny that objects are ultimately patterns of change and transformation" (Graeber 2001: 267). Looking at the world through materials and the complexity of processes of transformation has brought my own thinking closer to looking at materials *through* the

cosmological frames of makers. In this sense, Anne Salmond has talked about the "alchemy of taonga" (Salmond 1984: 20) in Māori culture, Alfred Gell "the alchemy of art" (Gell 1998: 53), and now I would like to suggest that there is an "alchemy of woollen blankets" that extends from its enchantment as a piece of material technology.

The localisation of the aesthetic has proven critical to knowing more completely the scale and scope of uses of woollen blankets within a global material-scape, as well as how the imagination reflects the larger cosmological spheres of the maker. In all instances, woollen blankets made visible the complexity of how makers negotiate self and group identities often in relation to, or in spite of, larger transnational colonial experiences.

Joanne Turney argues that "[t]he body and textiles are therefore borders marking the distance between the interior and the exterior, the social and the individual, which are, of course, subject to change over time and space" (Turney 2009). *Things* and objects carry significance and meaning across time and through history (I draw out this statement as a gesture towards Johannes Fabian's work in *Time and the Other* (2002)). In this context, woollen blankets are potent in that their permeable surfaces and existence as malleable matter make their multivalent uses innumerable. The fluidity of boundaries created by textiles and the body itself are, for example, in Lacanian thought, "merely illusory surfaces that attempt to protect or appear to make whole that which can never be. This will always be the case, as all surfaces are vulnerable: all are penetrated, and ultimately fragmented" (Turney 2009: 111). In this case Fred R. Myers' observations that objects can be intercultural or objects at the boundary resonate (Myers 2001: 55) here with the woollen blanket and their

vulnerability to be changed and accumulate narratives. “All narratives that explore and challenge the borders between the ‘inner’ self and the ‘outer’ world in terms of materiality, of causality, of intertwined agency are de facto part of a project of liberation—a cultural, ecological, ontological, and material liberation. Every vision intended to bridge the discursive and the material, the logos and the physics, mind and body, restoring new forms of awareness and conceptualisation of our material out-side, is an enterprise of liberation” (Ivino and Opperman 2012: 88). Therefore, we must reflect and wonder if liberation from the serviceable, utilitarian function also motivates makers to transform woollen blankets.

In advance of introducing the quotation, I agree with Bruno Latour’s argument about how we present knowledge from the field, and situate it here to demonstrate how makers situate the *things* they make. Latour writes:

> The ‘things’ you have gathered and displaced have to be presentable all at once to those you want to convince and who did not go there. In sum, you have to invent objects which have the properties of being mobile but also immutable, presentable, readable and combinable with one another” (Latour 1986: 9).

In this research, like most objects of study, by drawing attention to the way in which anthropology makes its objects of study, I have allowed the woollen blanket to be a technology of enchantment for myself and thus used that mystification to facilitate the mobility of my own research. But what is more palpable in Latour’s statement is that it is the makers who have invented ‘renewed’ objects from materials that have the qualitative properties that elicit reaction in their viewers who respond to the “immutable, presentable, readable” shared corporeal knowledge with woollen blankets for most.

The literal, figurative, and symbolic use of woollen blankets in each of the examples presented in Chapters One to Four makes visible the broader historical gesticulations of woollen blankets into distinct social and geographic contexts. These movements bring makers to tapping into the resulting meanings and values now entangled in woollen blankets through creative consumption and transformation as a form of moving woollen blankets even further from serviceable objects to ones with aesthetic value. This has allowed the woollen blanket to be "humble", "potent", "vexed" (Decter 2013), "vulnerable", "persistent" (Thatcher Ulrich 2012) and makes visible how the transformation of materials informs the socialisation of self and materials in our material world.

For all of the makers I learned with, it is clear that all are invested in the materials they use. Interested in their cultural significance and how they can mobilise their own agendas, objectives, and needs. I observed that this was often dictated by what the physical properties of a woollen blanket allow for the creative, conscious human maker.

Imagination and the Futurity of the Blanket

The woollen blanket is a multi-textured surface for cultural interchange. Siân Ede argues, "materials only come into use through social intervention—through invention, innovation, flow, choice, discovery, design, application, and use" (Ede 2000). Add to this list transformation and imagination. Rightly applied here, the term "material imagination" is used by Gaston Bachelard to describe how poets and scientists imagine the material world, and to this I would add artists, craftspeople, and Indigenous cultural practitioners. Imagination is itself always captivated by the world it

imagines. So the phrase "material imagination" signifies the intersection between the materiality of imagining and the imagination of the material.[106]

Makers from various cultures are "altering the way in which [materials like woollen blankets] [are] be[ing] received and thereby emphasising the fundamental importance of contexts and relationships" (Kemp & Schultz 2000: 91). Sometimes their works bring about the opportunity for shared experiences through congruent metaphors, stories, etc. "Shared memories attach to the material souvenirs of our love, and producing them is a kind of communion, with others and with the future" (Crawford 2009: 15). Interpreting Marcel Mauss and gesturing to the work of Nicholas Thomas, Bill Brown argues, "however materially stable objects may seem, they are, let us say, different thing in different scenes" (Brown 2001: 9).

But in terms of the futurity of the woollen blanket, as we saw in Southeast Alaska, its use is almost now obsolete in favour of new light-weight cooler materials that enhance performability. Additionally, crafts people and artists in Aotearoa New Zealand continually expressed to me that they are totally consuming their material history by exhausting the stock of woollen blankets in the back of cupboards of their homes and the homes of friends and family. Katherine Morrison noted to me that from her perspective she was working with a "finite resource". Therefore, there may not be any futurity of woollen blankets to be transformed if there are no woollen blankets left un-cut, un-sewn, un-folded, or un-acted upon.

[106] See, Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (*Earth and Reveries of Will*) discussed concisely in Ivino and Opperman (2012: 81).

Agency, Mystification, and Technologies of Enchantment

Circling back to Nicholas Thomas's ideas in his Foreword to *Art and Agency: Toward and Anthropology of* Art (1998), *things*, objects, or materials identified as a technology are by their very nature enchanting (Thomas 1998: viii). This relates to the agentive aspects of materials that I would argue extend from the metaphoric or qualitative qualities of woollen blankets. As Iovino and Opperman note, "[e]xtending the category of agency beyond the realm of the human, in fact, […] demonstrates the kinship between out-side and in-side, the mind and the world, embracing life, language, mind and sensorial perception in a non-dualistic perspective" (Iovino and Opperman 2012: 79).

Related to this are Alfred Gell's ideas of the agential potential of objects. Most critics of his work argue that he failed to "analyse how agency is imputed" (Preziosi and Farago 2012: 102) into objects because of a myopic focus. I do not take up that debate here. I do, however, as Thomas points out, accept that agency is "doing" (Thomas 1998: ix)—agency is the action or act of transforming the materials. In the case of the works of art, craft items, or Indigenous cultural property made from woollen blankets, I argue that agency was imbued in the process of, or in doing a material transformation. If "[t]he index is the material thing", in this case the woollen blanket "which motivates abductions of an art-related [or aesthetic] kind. What we have to consider under this rubric are instances in which the material index dictates to the artist, who responds as 'patient' to its inherent agency" (Gell 1998: 28). Again, as Siân Ede rightfully summarises:

> In contemporary works artists make unexpected associations and justapositions, conceptually and visually. They blend, mix, blur and contrast ideas, materials and relics, taking pleasure in the paradox and the

> unpredictable, highlighting the ordinary, the odd[,] and the obvious (Ede 2000: 51).

Anthropological Knowledge from Materials

Can materials be used as extensions or substitutions within conceptual or physical domains? Materials allow us to push against and alter boundaries between human, non-human, and environmental concepts. The logic behind my mixed-methods approach of interrogating the woollen blanket allowed me to explore more completely what kinds of research methods allow new understandings of materials in our material world to emerge. What resulted was an understanding of how information becomes embedded in, or extracted from, materials so as to illuminate certain creative human actions such as the aesthetic transformation of materials to be more accurately part of, not separate from, consumption and circulation.

One must, and I certainly do, feel tentative about my conclusions as they are affected by the continued vibrancy and development of all the contexts and makers I learned from, as well as my own thinking. I assert that this research on woollen blankets forwards the need to "follow materials" as Ingold suggests (Ingold 2012: 435) and the need for anthropology to look at other transformed materials over time and space to push beyond the paradigms of thinking around consumption and circulation. Lucy Norris writes: "The logical outcome of a theoretical approach [that] focuses upon the efficacy of materials as relational constructs (for example Strathern 1988, 1999) points to the role of dispersal, loss, and destruction of objects in processes of memory formation, forgetting, and remaking (Kuechler 1992, 2002)" (Norris 2010: 6). Again, in Norris's work we see the gesture toward studying transformed materials across time and place.

Therefore, my ethnographic project strategically took up an engaged materials approach of following a *thing* to see in what ways theory could emerge from the materials, and to show how not all materials fit within current theoretical frames applied in anthropology. This approach was to a large degree inspired by the arguments of Animira Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell in *Thinking Through Things* (2007) where they encouraged anthropologists of material culture to, as this ethnography has demonstrated, embrace the study of the imaginative actions on materials that lead to their transformation. They write: "[r]ather than dismiss informants' accounts as imaginative 'interpretations'—elaborate metaphorical accounts of 'reality' that is already given—anthropologists might instead seize on these engagements as opportunities from which novel theoretical understandings can emerge" (Henere *et al*. 2007: 1).

"[E]thnography is a process for creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on [the] ethnographers' own experiences" (Pink 2007: 22). In the process of conducting interviews, field observations, archival work, and object analysis within museum and private collections, this project became also about time. The very nature of this research required an exhaustive consideration of time in historical uses of woollen blankets to chart out the shifting values, metaphors, uses, and applications as cultural property in each field site. Time is an important dimension to material culture studies as it allows a "chronicle as well as a chronology" of changes and events as Johannes Fabian notes (Fabian 2002: 13).[107] Time enables a more complete mapping of the culturally shifting,

[107] According George Kubler "the systematic study of things is less than five hundred years old, beginning with the description of works of art in the artists' biographies of the Italian

emergent, and complex values of woollen blankets. Therefore this contemporary ethnography reflects the fourth type of time that Fabian calls "intersubjective time" whereby I focused upon "current communicative nature of human actions and interactions" (Fabian 2002: 23).

Final Thoughts on Transformation as a Process and Transformed Materials

Woollen blankets are a potent material *thing* used to articulate the depth of historic and contemporary local and global relations and tensions. The woollen blanket has led me to even wonder: What other material, *thing*, or object could elicit this sort of rich global, local, personal, cultural, and metaphorical reaction or action like a woollen blanket? Admittedly it is hard to think of one.

Throughout this fieldwork I became both a participant with, and an observer of, woollen blankets. I observed the distinct types of transformations in art galleries, museums, craft markets, homes, studios, and in ceremonial contexts. I was a participant in that I was often invited to sew alongside children who were learning to make regalia, or participate in informal sewing circles with contemporary artists and other volunteers. In other contexts I was both participant and observer at craft markets. But long before this I had my own corporeal knowledge of woollen blankets having avoided the itchy pink woollen blanket my mother had on her bed that she

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Renaissance. The method was extended to the description of all kinds of things only after 1750" (Kubler 1962: 1). Kubler also writes, and we must take this as a rich archive of thought from the 1960s in art history that: "Our [art historians] choice of the 'history of things' is more than a euphemism to replace the bristling ugliness of 'material culture.' This term is used by anthropologists to distinguish ideas, or 'mental culture,' from artifacts. But the 'history of things' is intended to reunite ideas and objects under the rubric of visual forms: the term includes both artifacts and works of art, both tools and expressions—in short all materials worked by human hands under the guidance of connected ideas developed in temporal sequence. From all of these things a shape of time emerges" (Kubler 1962: 9).

brought with her from Ireland. I came to "know" blankets and appreciate their potential for having "cognitive stickiness" (Gell 1992) through myself receiving them as gifts for graduation in Canada or as a token of gratitude from an elderly friend in Aotearoa New Zealand, to buying my own Onehunga cotton-candy pink and green puce woollen blanket in a second-hand thrift store during field work in the town of Thames to understand the process and time it takes to acquire this ready-made material. Impartiality, then, is not fully possible as my own embodied knowledge with the physical properties brought me in to proximity with makers to enhance a greater understanding of *their* creative transformative processes (Patai 1987).

As a move toward a conclusion of this thesis with a gesture for "theoretical elegance" (Hertzfeld 2010: 291) on the transformation of materials and matter, I have come to think of the transformation of woollen blankets in two ways. First, in relation to Arnold van Gennep's ideas on liminality. I suggest that looking at the transformation of materials as a process dependent upon creative human action that there is an abstracted legibility as a type of, what I might call, 'material liminality'. In all three case studies presented in this thesis, the liminal stage in the transformation of materials (and this includes the rituals of circulation and consumption) keeps the woollen blanket within a ritual of creative processes where it sits at a 'threshold' from having been a serviceable, utilitarian object to becoming a new form of cultural heritage. My second theoretical idea to emerge situates transformation as a form of reification. What I mean is, that transforming materials not only captures the way materials are imagined, moved, and consumed to reflect the culturally relative values of the maker, but it brings both the new form and the makers' knowledge into being, often in a tangible way, to show the imagined potential of our material world. It is here where

Susanne Kuechler's call to action stated at the outset of this thesis argues for a "closer engagement with the ecology of cultural imagination" within anthropology (Kuechler 2014). Therefore, as "material beings inhabiting a material world […]" it is the diversity of human actions through creative transformation on material *things* that allows for future imaginings of woollen blankets beyond the bottom of a bed (Phillips 2012).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
Informed Consent Sample Letter and Forms

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON Department of Anthropology
14 Taviton Street. London, England. WC1H 0BW

Research Project Summary

Dear {NAME},

I hope this letter finds you well. Thank you in advance for sharing with me your knowledge and experience with woollen blankets {INSERT SPECIFICS ABOUT THEIR WORK}. The information that you will voluntarily share with me is part of a Doctoral research project entitled, *Charting Material Memories: an ethnography of visual and material responses to woollen blankets in the Pacific Northwest of North America and Aotearoa/New Zealand*. The project is led by myself, Fiona. P. McDonald, a PhD Candidate at University College London (England) in the Department of Anthropology. This project is supported in part by the Canadian High Commission (London) and University College London (UK).

The objective of this research is to gain further understandings in to the memories associated with woollen blankets today in contemporary art. This project also examines the historic use of woollen blankets within various contexts and seeks to understand how contemporary artists and designers create, share, present, and work with blankets. Your specific knowledge of and experience with HBC blankets will enable me to learn more about the importance of woollen blankets in Canada today. I thank you for this.

I would like to stress once again that *all participation in this project is strictly voluntary* and as such you will be asked to kindly share your experience(s) and knowledge of woollen blankets. In order to ensure that you are content with our conversations, I am attaching a form that assures for you that I will only use the information that you have shared with me in accordance with the highest ethical standards (Interviewer Consent). I have also attached a form that confirms your consent and willingness to participate in this research, as well as a form that shows my responsibilities as the researcher. (Interviewee Consent). If you could please read the attached forms and return the Interviewee Consent form signed to me as a PDF that would be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to edit the consent form to address your specific requests or amendment, or contact me via email and I can clarify any questions you may have. I want to ensure that you are confident in my commitment to protect your intellectual property and that all ethics are address in a clear and concise manner.

The results from this study will be used to inform a PhD dissertation that will be submitted for the completion of a Doctoral Degree. After completion of this project, it is the goal and intention of to share this research at conferences, in academic publications, and has the potential to become a travelling exhibition.

Your cooperation is *greatly* appreciated and I look forward to collaborating with you! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions and I look forward to more conversations together.

Sincerely,

Fiona P. McDonald

PhD Candidate
University College London (Anthropology)

UCL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON Department of Anthropology
14 Taviton Street. London, England. WC1H 0BW

Informed Consent Interviewee Waiver

1. I hereby agree that I willingly participate in an interview(s)/conversation(s) with Fiona P. McDonald in connection with the doctoral research project known as *Charting Material Memories* on: (date) _____ and through email correspondence 2011-onward.
2. I agree that the interview can be recorded by audio and documented by written notes. I am aware that during the interview/conversation that I will be identified by name. As such, I am aware that I may also be identified by name in any transcript (whether verbatim or edited) of such interview, subject to my consent (see below). If I choose to remain anonymous my name will not appear in the transcript or reference to any material contained in the interview.
3. I agree that images provided to Fiona P. McDonald or photographs that she has personally documented can be used in the final dissertation and associated presentations.
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the project without prejudice prior to the execution and delivery of the final research project (July 2012). In the event that I withdraw from the project, any recording made of interviews/conversations with Fiona P. McDonald will be either given to me or destroyed, and no transcript will be made of the recording. I understand that a photograph of me, my work, and my work area may be taken or borrowed for duplication, and that if I withdraw from the project, the photograph(s) will be given to me.
5. I understand that upon completion of the interview/conversation that the recording and content of the interview belong to Fiona P. McDonald for research purposes only, and that the information in our conversations/interview can be used by the interviewer/researcher. Fiona P. McDonald can use information from these conversations in any manner determined in the future in relation to her research, including, but not limited to, public presentations and publications without further consent.
6. Any restrictions as to use of portions of the interview indicated by me can be edited out of the final copy of the transcript or recording that exists.
7. I understand that at the conclusion of this particular study and upon signing this form that any recording, notes, photograph(s) will remain with Fiona P. McDonald for her research files, and that they will be managed with the highest standard of care in accordance with rigorous ethical standards.
8. If I have questions about the research project or procedures, I know I can contact Fiona P. McDonald at fiona.mcdonald.09@ucl.ac.uk or fionamcdonald5@yahoo.ca.

Please initial the items below:

____ I agree to be identified by name in any transcript or reference to any information contained in this interview to be used in the aforementioned research project.
____ I wish to remain anonymous in any transcript or reference to any information contained in this interview.
____ I wish to list restrictions: _____.

Interviewee:

Interviewer name [please print]
_____
Interviewee signature_____
Email address
_____

Interviewer:

Interviewer name [please print]
Fiona P. McDonald

Interviewer signature

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON Department of Anthropology
14 Taviton Street. London, England. WC1H 0BW

Interviewer Consent Form

1. I, Fiona P. McDonald, hereby agree to be the sole interviewer and researcher in connection with the project known as *Charting Material Memories*. This is a PhD research project.
2. I agree that interviews/conversations/communications conducted by me will be recorded either by audio, video, or by written notes, as well as photography that can/will be transcribed. I agree to inform the interviewee of the interview conditions and retain original signed copies of the attached forms at the conclusion of the project.
3. I agree that I will respect the interviewee's rights as outlined in the attached forms and will not use information from the interview(s) prior to the interviewee's completion of the Informed Consent Waiver.
4. I understand that upon completion of the interview(s)/conversation(s) that the recording and content of the interview(s) belong to the interviewer (Fiona P. McDonald). I also agree not to deposit any of these recordings or transcriptions at another institution or repository without the express permission of the interviewee. I also agree to maintain these records in accordance with the highest of ethical standards and protocols.

Interviewer:

Interviewer name [please print]: Fiona P. McDonald

Phone number:

Email address

Date:

APPENDIX 2

Colonialism Ain't Fashionable. Homepage available at http://colonialismaintfashionable.tumblr.com/, last accessed 14 January 2014

Home Whats wrong with the Blanket? Take My Pic Down! Submit A Pic! Archive

Colonialism Ain't Fashionable

Have you ever seen someone wearing a Bay jacket and didn't know what to do about how furious you felt? Take a picture, and submit it to us! To be clear, we hate colonialism, not the people wearing the jackets.

Whats wrong with the Blanket?

- page in development -

Let us be perfectly clear:

- This is not about people making better consumer choices; not buying the blanket or buying/wearing the jacket does not actually challenge

colonialism.

- We're documenting the people wearing/owning these items to spark discussion on Canada's hidden colonial history. We don't want to shame individuals, but we do want to shame this culture that collectively allows Hudson's Bay to continue to exist and flourish in almost every city in the country. (see #4 below)

- The Hudson's Bay jacket is a visible symbol of the colonialization of North America and must be challenged on a cultural level.

- Decolonization must be about changing the material, physical reality, including our own actions, so that we fight against and punish those who are responsible for the theft of indigenous lands, the attacks on indigenous culture, the murder and disappearance of indigenous women, and the many other daily injustices pervaded by the Canadian state.

Here are some more facts:

1. Hudson's Bay Company was the de-facto colonial ruler in North America.
2. Hudson's Bay invented the "Points Blanket" (featured in this blog) to force indigenous communities to enter into trade relationships with them.
3. The blanket was used in the first instance of biological warfare - with small pox infected blankets handed out in to Indigneous communities.
4. The Hudson's Bay Company was one of the first multi-national corporations created by European powers to colonize the world called the Chartered Companies. Its the only one that has been in continuous operation to this date.

APPENDIX 3
Interview Questions (Alaska)

Sealaska Heritage Institute
One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 301 • Juneau • Alaska • 99801-1249 • (907) 586-9161
www.sealaskaheritage.org • www.alaskanativeartists.com • Fax (907) 586-9293

UCL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON Department of Anthropology
14 Taviton Street, London, England, WC1H 0BW

Interview Questions

Below are a few questions that may be addressed during the interview. However, you are welcome to answer them directly or not, but they are a general guideline for our conversation together.

1. Do you own a button blanket? If yes, how did you come to own one?
2. Can you share some details about your button blankets (ie. Materials, crest, who made it, when did you receive it? etc...)
3. Do you make or sew button blankets?
4. Do you recall when you first wore a button blanket?
5. What do you think, remember, feel, when you wear your button blanket?
6. What stories do you know about the origin of button blankets?
7. Do you recall images or stories of woolen blankets being used for button blankets?
8. Can you explain to me how a button blanket becomes at.oow?
9. The crest on your blanket, is this unique? Does anyone else share this crest design?
10. What role does the blanket play in ceremonies for you?
11. When you wear your button blanket do you wear other regalia as well?
12. When you look at another person's blanket what can you tell?
13. What do button blankets mean to you and your family?
14. Can you tell me if there are different meanings behind these various styles of crests and blanket designs?
15. How do you store your button blanket?
16. When was the last time you wore your button blanket?

Fiona P. McDonald
Visiting Scholar—Sealaska Heritage Institute
PhD Candidate
University College London (England)
Department of Anthropology

APPENDIX 4
A Short History of Woollen Blanket Coats

cf. McDonald, Fiona P. 2006. Chapter One: Point Blanket as Sign. In *Blanketing a Nation: Tracing the Social Life of the Hudson's Bay Company Point Blanket in Canadian Visual Culture*. MA Thesis. Edmonton: University of Alberta.

The blanket coat has a rather expansive history in the social life of the Hudson's Bay Company Point blanket. According to a didactic marketing panel—one of the many examples of popular history that oversimplifies the social life of the Point blanket:

[108]

Still sold in Hudson's Bay Company department stores today, a coat made from a Point blanket has been known as a Mackinaw Coat,[109] St. Joseph coat,[110] Kersey or

[108] This didactic panel is an example of a popular history commonly associated with blankets and capotés. Although this thesis is not directly concerned within the history of capotés, the history of this garment foregrounds an alternative use of the Point blanket. (Photocopy of in-store advertising signage on display in Hudson's Bay Company Department stores in 2004-2005. Photocopy of image courtesy HBC—West Edmonton Mall location)

[109] Linda Richardson "Mackinaws Came from St. Joes's," in *The Sault Daily Star* (April 5, 1980), and H.J.L. Wooley, "The Origin of the Mackinaw Coat" in *The Canadian Magazine* (January, 1928): 28, in the HBCA Blanket Search File #3—Coats). See also, W.R. Swagerty, "Indian Trade Blankets in the Pacific Northwest: History and Symbolism of a unique North American Tradition," Columbia: The Magazine of Northwest History (Summer 2002, vol.16, no.2): 6. Apparently, woolen mills in Buffalo, New York, made Mackinaw coats (From Leaky Letter: HBCA Blanket Search File#1).

[110] I first came across a reference to this style of coat in an article by Linda Richardson in *The Sault Daily Star*, "Mackinaws came from St.Joe's," (5 April, 1980). (HBCA Beaver Search File—Blankets).

Kersey Cloth,[111] Red River Coat,[112] or capoté.[113] The capoté is made of Point blankets of various sizes and colours, and has become an article of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clothing.

> H.J.L. Wooley summarises the history of the Mackinaw Coat by noting that: A despatch runner requested that his coat be made short, not below the knee, as the snow was deep between Mackinaw and Montreal. So the Mackinaw coat was designed, a short, thick, double-breasted coat of blue design at first but plaid soon became the most popular colour. It was found to be just the thing of the Northern trails and orders came in from as far North as Fort William and as far East as Penetanguishene, and throughout the vast region it was known as the Mackinaw coat. […] [I]t was thus created,—a child of grim necessity.[114]

The name for Mackinaw coats originates from Fort Michilimackinac, a British fort built in 1761 on Mackinac Island.[115] According to Linda Richardson, both Mackinaw and St. Joseph coats are "short coats made of a thick, blanket-like, commonly plaid, woollen material." Richardson explores the history of this coat back to St. Joseph Island at Fort St. Joseph where it first appeared in 1811. This style of coat emerged when Captain Charles Roberts, apparently unable to attain greatcoats for his forty men from the headquarters in Québec, ordered blankets from the post manned by the Indian Department. Upon the arrival of the blankets, they were to be sewn into greatcoats for his men. Richardson notes that:

> The difficulty of converting the blankets into passable coats was solved by John Askin, keeper of the King's store, who put a group of Indian women to work making coats. When the women had finished they had produced a makeshift coat that many of the soldiers felt was better than the regular army issue. The coats, made of 3 ½ -point Hudson's Bay blankets, were not only warmer but were finer looking. Askin had them decorated with brass buttons, shoulder straps and fancy pockets.[116]

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[111] W.R. Swagerty, in "Indian Trade Blankets in the Pacific Northwest," from *Columbia 16*, no.2 (Summer 2002).

[112] "Red River Coat" is one of the many styles of a capoté ("Hudson's Bay Company: Its 'point' blankets have survived the rigid test of 159 frigid northern winters," *Textile Age* (Oct 1938): 30). I have not found historical references for this name or its specific social use at the Red River Settlement.

[113] The capotés have also played a role in the Canadian fashion industry (See Appendix V for a survey of capoté designs published in the Beaver).

[114] Wooley, 30. (HBCA Blanket Search File #3—Coats) Often associated with Point blankets, editorial notes throughout search files on 'Blanket Coats and Leisure Wear' at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives note that the Mackinaw coats were not made from HBC Point Blankets for soldiers.

[115] Richardson, (HBCA Beaver Search File—Blankets).

[116] Richardson, "Mackinaws came from St.Joe's." Although I have yet to find any definitive information on Kersey or Kersey cloth used in coats, I would like to propose that this connection is linked with textile production in the town of Kersey in Suffolk, England. According to Swagerty, it was "[d]uring the 18th century, with mechanization of the wool

Capotés, while functional for survival through grim winters, have played a prominent role in the Canadian fashion industry. Popular in advertisements from the 1930s through to the 1950s, the Hudson's Bay Company has designed gender specific styles adapted from the original capoté design.[117] Alfred Sung designed his own capoté (now in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum), and models for Ralph Lauren and Maidenform have been draped in the capoté to epitomise advertising and national identity in Canada. The capoté was the signature 'robe' in the 1950s for Queen Muk-Luk and her attendants,[118] in addition to being the uniform for the Queen of Le Pas/Le Festival du Voyageur in Winnipeg.[119]

A prominent feature used in association with capotés is the ceinture fléchée or a L'Assomption sash. Taking its name from Assomption, Québec, the sash is woven on a loom with an arrow pattern.[120] Used functionally to hold together a coat, this object, worn by the *coureur des bois* in *The Trader*, is yet another sign that often appears in conjunction with blankets. The sash serves more as a functional object in clothing but was also traded by French traders with Aboriginals as a tool to build trading relationships.

While numerous written documents suggest that the blankets were first fashioned into coats for military personnel, popular histories elaborate on a narrative that tells how Aboriginals reconstituted their trade blankets into coats and other functional articles of clothing prior to their military use in 1811. In terms of military coats, blue and white blanket coats have been used as part of winter dress.[121] These two colours are also indicative of British and American troops during the American Revolution in the uniforms of Sentry soldiers. [122]

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industry, England took full advantage of the expansive Indian trade market and built upon an established reputation of producing the finest woollens Europe had to offer. The towns of Witney in Oxfordshire, Stroud in Gloucester, Kersey in Suffolk, and much of Yorkshire—especially Halifax and Leeds—specialised in three types of woollens shipped overseas" (*Columbia 16*, no.2 (Summer 2002): p.5). Swagerty comments that Kersey or Kersey Cloth was "a common staple cloth of Yorkshire that was used for military uniforms and garments for the poorer classes. He also notes that "according to the late Charles Hanson, who researched the Point blanket thoroughly, these blankets originated with the French for trade with their Indian allies, probably during the period of the Fox Wars. A 1715 French account book lists ten two-Point Blankets as expense for Indian services" (p.6).

[117] This garment is still available in stores today.

[118] HBCA 1987/363-W-117-68.

[119] HBCA 1987/363-W115/57.

[120] Adolf Hungry Wolf suggests a popular narrative about this object. Wolf states that "Hudson's Bay Assumption [sic] sash belt was basically red, with many colors interwoven[;] it was worn by Natives and trappers alike […]" (Hungry Wolf, 30).

[121] John Mollo notes "winter dress of the inhabitants of Canada […] was adopted by the participants on both sides" in *Uniforms of the American Revolution* (Dorset: United Kingdom, 1975), 196.

[122] According to Mollo's historical research, a member of the sentry would commonly wear a white blanket coat with a blue band (196). McGregor comments that "[t]here are many descriptions of this special winter clothing issued to the troops in America. It consisted of long blue cloth […] a 'capacious under-jacket, the sleeves being made of strong white corduory', [*sic*] and a Canadian overcoat, or *capot*, made of white melton, lined with sheepskin" (190). The corduroy is also mentioned in the 1928 letter between Lecky and Adney, when Adney

APPENDIX 5
Boys Scout History/Story (Aotearoa New Zealand)

This is a sample of a narrative relating to material and memory associations of woollen blankets and their use in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Scout Blanket

by Andy Knight (2010)

Part of the culture of being a scout is the collection of badges. Usually these 'merit' badges are earned and awarded through a process of learning, discovery or tasks. They are then sewn onto a Scout's uniform shirt which gives an instant indication and recognition of that person's progress and experience in their Scouting life.

As well as the meritocratic process of collecting badges, a further tradition exists whereby Scouts gain additional badges through the mutual practice of swapping them. As well as the badges that denote merit, experience and seniority, there are many more that can identify the troop or region to which that Scout belongs; events as such camps and jamborees for which badges are created to commemorate them and a dozen other activities besides.

As well as collecting badges, it was also possible to collect scarves. It is part of a Scout's uniform to wear a scarf; the colour of the scarf and sometimes a badge on the back of the neck also serves to identify which troop or geographic group the Scout belongs. The scarf is fixed at the throat with a 'woggle'.

The best place to indulge in the collection and swapping of badges is a jamboree, which is a major national gathering of Scouts occurring every four years. It is common for Scouts from other countries to visit these events, making it a perfect opportunity to gain badges from all corners of the world. Most Scouts aspire to attending at least one jamboree in their lifetime.

There is no point in spending many years on building up such a collection without having some way of displaying them. To this end, the traditional practice of owning a Scout blanket is a way to display one's collection.

At the time when I was a Scout, the standard blanket for this purpose was that type commonly in use in the military and hospitals. It was a plain grey blanket and usually had a coloured stripe running the length of it; which could be red, blue or green. The blanket border had simple stitching with colour to match. Red was usually the preferred colour.

Once a Scout felt that he had enough of a badge collection to make the exercise worthwhile, the normal practice was to sew the badges onto the blanket in any type of arrangement that pleased the individual. With the various shapes and sizes of badges, they could be arranged in any way to form geometric shapes and usually sought to have some kind of symmetry in the arrangement.

As well as attaching badges, it was also common to see the collection of scarves fastened to the blanket in such a way that they overlapped each other; with a gap wide enough to display the badges or embroidery that they contained.

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writes that "'Corduroy' was not only a common breeches or trousers material but regularly used for 'jackets' by the North West voyageurs" (p.5: HBCA Blanket Search File#1).

Once this process was complete, the entire blanket would be worn as a cloak. Sometimes the top edge of the blanket would be folded over and stitched down containing a drawstring inside, so it could be draped around the shoulders and fastened in a loose knot at the breastbone, thus forming the cloak.
As the blanket would usually take many hours to create and contained several years' worth of effort in collecting the vast numbers of badges, it goes without saying that it was a Scout's pride and joy. The blankets had an almost ceremonial quality about them. Therefore it is unsurprising that they were rarely brought out of safe storage. Usually, the only time they are spotted is at camps and major gatherings of Scouts, such as jamborees. During the normal course of the day, the blanket is used to decorate a Scout's bed or camp stretcher. In the evening, when it was customary to build a campfire, assemble around it and sing songs, the blanket would be worn as a cloak.
Unfortunately, there were often cases of theft by those who were either envious or too lazy to make their own. Hence they would only come out on special occasions and even then guarded fiercely.
As each Scout's blanket is purely a matter of individual choice, selection of badges and aesthetic sensibility, it is fair to say that every blanket is completely unique. There could even be gasps of amazement when some blankets came out on display around the campfire. It was almost reminiscent of a peacock spreading his tail feathers in a proud display.
My own blanket was handed down to me by my mother, who was a Girl Guide. These days, girls can join the Scouting movement but back then it was strictly for boys only. The blanket she gave me is as I described it above; plain grey with a red stripe, folded on one side with a drawstring cord so it could be worn around the shoulders.
Of course, it came already adorned with some Guiding badges, which offended my masculine sensibilities, so I ordered these to be removed. What was left behind however was a hand-made map of New Zealand in red felt which had been stitched on – I liked this.
At the time I received it, I had recently 'moved up' to Scouts from 'Cubs', which is Scouting for a younger age group (7-11 years). This meant that I had a collection of merit badges from Cubs which I could no longer wear as these were now discarded afresh to begin collecting Scout badges for my new uniform.
So my blanket began with all the badges I had to date at that point. The irony of the situation is that despite not wanting any of my mother's Girl Guide badges, it was she who sewed every badge I got both onto my uniform shirt and my blanket, as I didn't know how to sew. She tried to teach me a few times but I wasn't a willing student. So for all my determination for the blanket to be a manly display of my exploits, it was produced with a loving feminine touch.
That's about as far as I ever got with the blanket. During the course of my Scouting career I collected many scarves and hundreds of badges, but they never made it onto the blanket. I always had the intention of doing it someday, but never got around to it. I guess my mother wasn't too keen on encouraging me, as ultimately it would be her task to spend the many hours required to sew them on.
I still harbour the hopelessly romantic notion that one day my children will also discover Scouting and I can pass it all onto them, with a renewed vigour [sic] *for finishing it at some point.*

The Military Bedpack

Another possible reason the blanket was never completed is that I never truly finished my Scouting career. In New Zealand a Scout graduates at the age of 16 and, if still interested in the Scouting movement, can move up to Venturers and even afterwards onto Rovers. This means that if someone is enamoured [sic] *enough with the experience, they can continue Scouting until the age of 26. After that there is the option of becoming an adult Scout leader.*

However, by the age of fifteen my attention had been diverted elsewhere. From a very young age I was obsessed with aviation and my aspiration was to be a pilot. As a teenager I was determined to be an Air Force pilot and hopefully fly fighter jets. I became aware of an organisation called the Air Training Corps, which around the world is usually known as Air Cadets. Although it is technically a civilian organisation, it is very closely affiliated with the regular armed forces and a cadet movement exists for each of the three armed services. My father always somewhat regrettably referred to it as the 'Hitler Youth Group'.

We wore the same uniforms as the RNZAF and the only distinction was the word 'Cadet Forces' on the uniform's epaulettes. It is for teenagers aged 13 to 17 and at that upper age limit you are simply asked to leave, unless you are invited to stay and become a commissioned officer at the age of 18, which is what I did and I remained involved as an adult leader and instructor well into my late twenties.

Among the various activities were frequent weekend camps and week-long courses during school holidays and these were held on Air Force bases and Army camps. We always stayed in barracks like the ones you see in the movies where the new recruits are undergoing 'boot camp'.

Each of the cast-iron single beds in the barracks came with the standard issue of five of the same blankets described above – grey, with red stitching and a vertical red stripe. These were accompanied by two white sheets and a single white pillow case, with which obviously to make one's bed.

Each morning after reveille and before breakfast, the drill was to shower and clean the barracks from top to bottom. This was then followed by an inspection where the unit's officers would enter the barracks for a detailed examination of hygiene and cleanliness which sometimes even involved white gloves, depending on the temperament of the officers concerned.

Part of this process was the requirement to make a 'bedpack'. This involved stripping the bed of all blankets and linen. One of the five blankets had to be arranged on the mattress to cover it completely and required perfect 'hospital corners'.

The remaining four blankets were then used to make the bedpack. Each blanket had a uniform way it had to be folded, so the front edge presented an even fold. The method is lost to me now, but usually on the first night of the camp, a drill instructor would demonstrate the singular acceptable way to fold the blanket and we were expected to remember it for the duration.

The sheets were folded the same way. Three of the blankets were folded; the fourth one was used to make a case for the others to fit inside. On top of the case, the remaining linen was placed in the order of blanket, sheet, blanket, sheet, blanket. Each of these had to be perfectly identical in size and width. This was so the casing blanket could then wrap around them in such a manner that the resulting bedpack was perfectly square and contained.

Essentially it was an exercise in discipline, uniformity and teamwork. It was impossible to make one alone; you had to find a buddy and help make each other's. It seemed like a pointless undertaking to me. Sure, you had thirty or more beds in the barracks that looked exactly the same with no room for personal expression, but otherwise it was time-consuming and annoying.

I once asked whether there was actually any functional purpose to this and received the answer that in the event of a fire, the quartermaster could run through the barracks and toss each bedpack out of the window. Later I asked some regular Air Force personnel about this and they each stated that the only time they ever had to make them was during basic training. After that, they had never been required to make them again. Most of the living quarters I ever got to see of regular force personnel who had long since graduated from this phase of their military careers more closely resembled a teenager's bedroom.

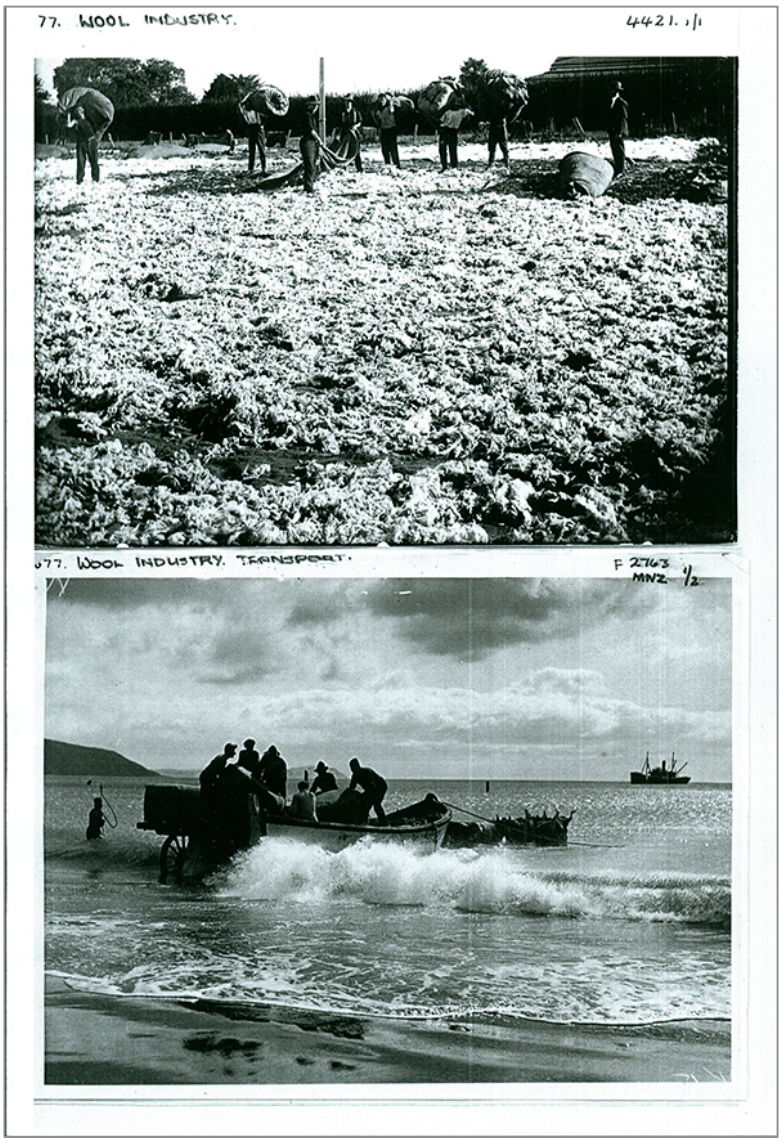
Since then, I have never seen those grey blankets with the coloured stripes ever again. But they are firmly etched on my memory and an undeniable part of my youth.

APPENDIX 6

Sample images from the Wellington City Archives, Aotearoa New Zealand

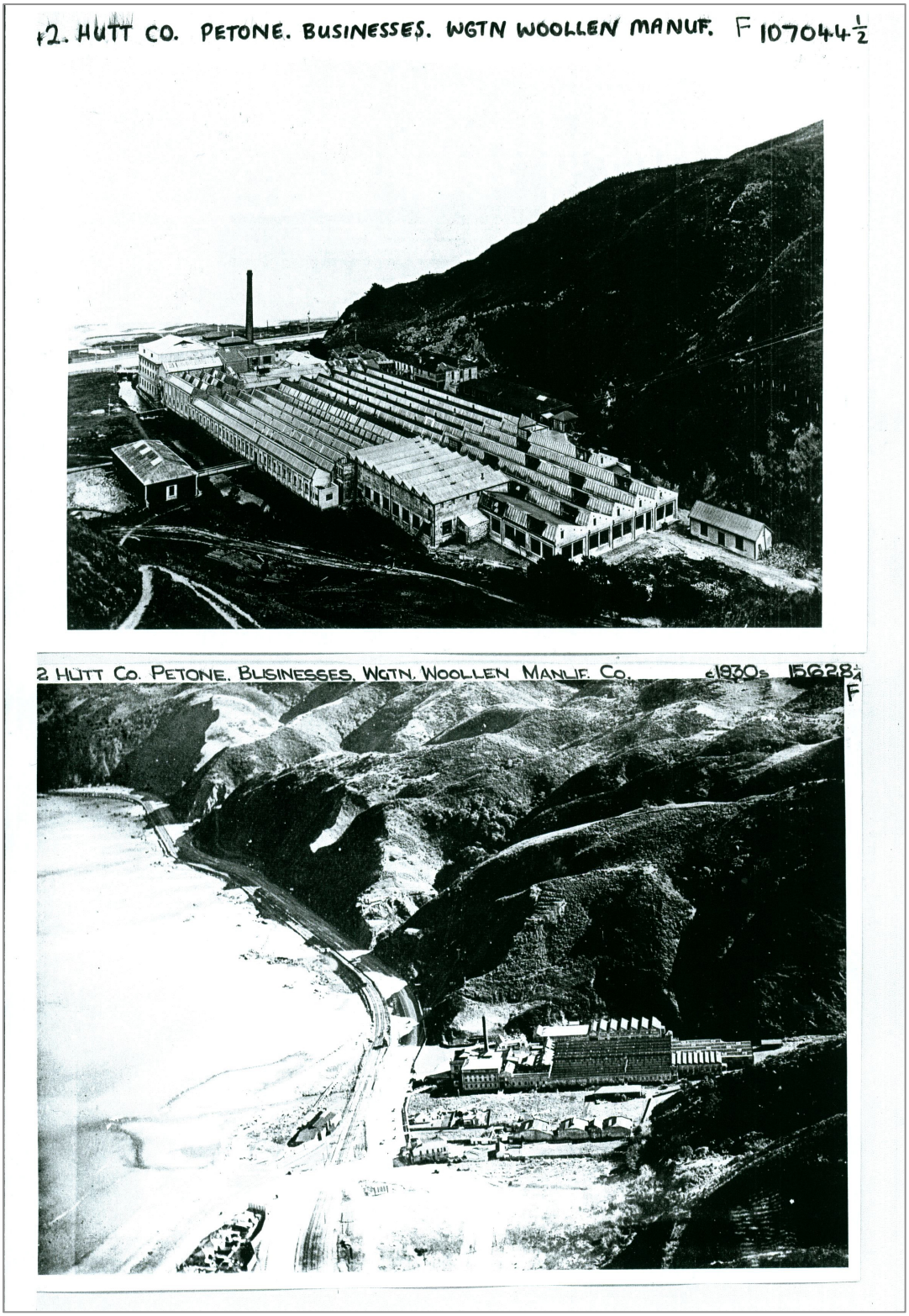
Search Files:

- Hutt Co. Petone Businesses, Wellington Woollen Co.
- Wool Industry Transport
- Wool Industry



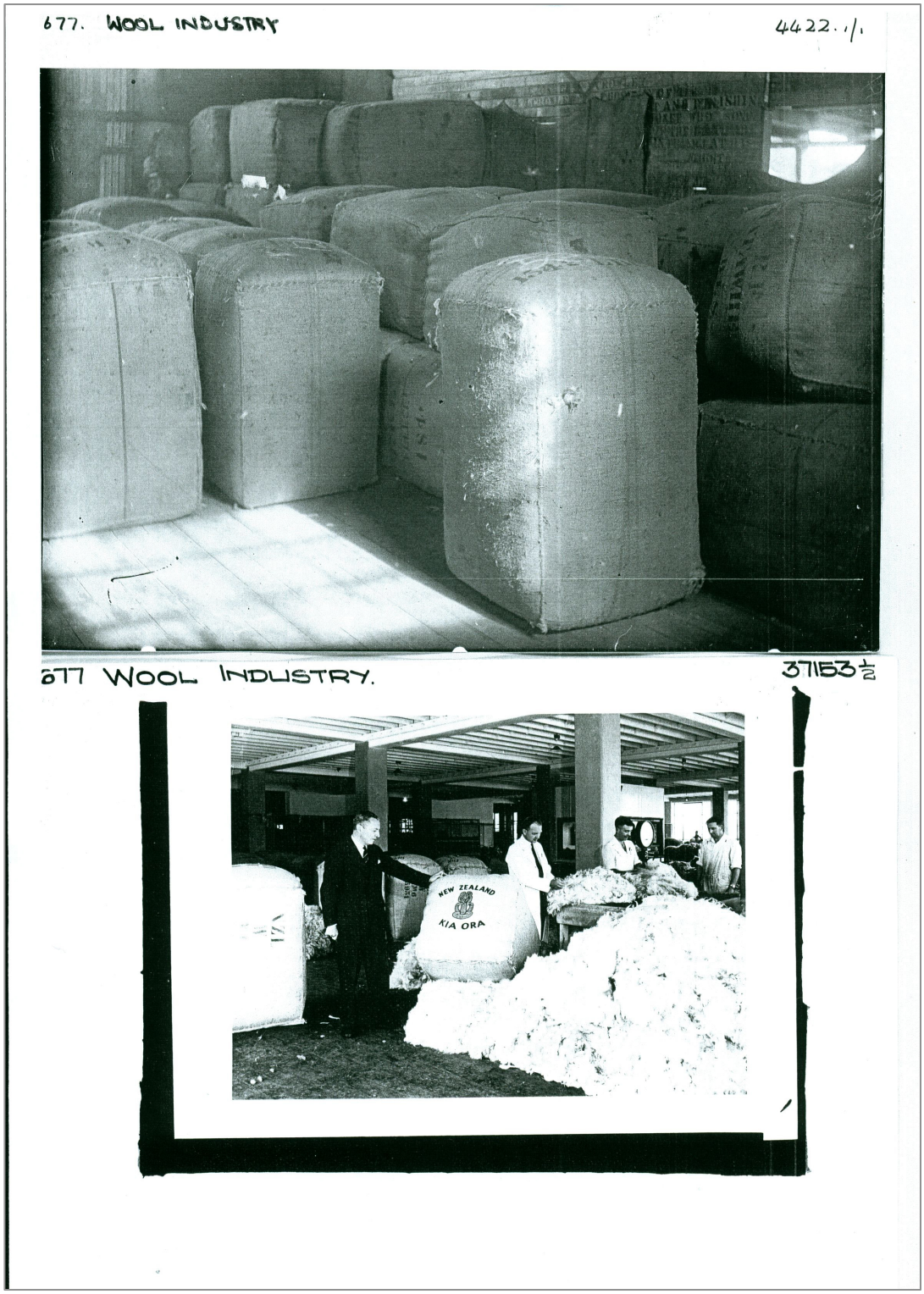
TOP: 4421. W. Tuckers Ltd., Whakatu. Scours drying paddock. 1926. Bull Tucker on Right (information from Julie Bremner, 1985).

BOTTOM: 2763. “For many years, wool from East Coast was shipped in the manner shown. The bales were transferred from [illegible …]”. 1930s?



TOP: 51. No details.

BOTTOM: 15628. No details. Neg. donated by Mr. Peat.



TOP: 4422. Wool scour of W. Tucker Ltd. Whakatu, c. 1920. Storage Shed. Identified by Jack Tucker for Julie Bremner 1985.

BOTTOM: 37153. Gordon Burt. No other details.

APPENDIX 7
Handmade Buyers Survey. November 2012
Generated by Survey Expression.
Used with permission by Mel Stothers of New Zealand Handmade

Handmade Buyers Survey

1. General

1. Which Country do you live in?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Afghanistan	0.00%	0
Albania	0.00%	0
Algeria	0.00%	0
Andorra	0.00%	0
Angola	0.00%	0
Antigua and Barbuda	0.00%	0
Argentina	0.00%	0
Armenia	0.00%	0
Australia	5.13%	6
Austria	0.00%	0
Azerbaijan	0.00%	0
Bahamas	0.00%	0
Bahrain	0.00%	0
Bangladesh	0.00%	0
Barbados	0.00%	0
Belarus	0.00%	0
Belgium	0.00%	0
Belize	0.00%	0
Benin	0.00%	0
Bhutan	0.00%	0
Bolivia	0.00%	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.00%	0
Botswana	0.00%	0

Brazil	0.00%	0
Brunei Darussalam	0.00%	0
Bulgaria	0.00%	0
Burkina Faso	0.00%	0
Burundi	0.00%	0
Cambodia	0.00%	0
Cameroon	0.00%	0
Canada	0.85%	1
Cape Verde	0.00%	0
Central African Republic	0.00%	0
Chad	0.00%	0
Chile	0.00%	0
China	0.00%	0
Colombia	0.00%	0
Comoros	0.00%	0
Congo	0.00%	0
Costa Rica	0.00%	0
Croatia	0.00%	0
Cuba	0.00%	0
Cyprus	0.00%	0
Czech Republic	0.00%	0
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.00%	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.00%	0
Denmark	0.00%	0
Djibouti	0.00%	0
Dominica	0.00%	0
Dominican Republic	0.00%	0
Ecuador	0.00%	0
Egypt	0.00%	0
El Salvador	0.00%	0

Equatorial Guinea	0.00%	0
Eritrea	0.00%	0
Estonia	0.00%	0
Ethiopia	0.00%	0
Fiji	0.00%	0
Finland	0.00%	0
France	0.00%	0
Gabon	0.00%	0
Gambia	0.00%	0
Georgia	0.00%	0
Germany	0.00%	0
Ghana	0.00%	0
Greece	0.00%	0
Grenada	0.00%	0
Guatemala	0.00%	0
Guinea	0.00%	0
Guinea-Bissau	0.00%	0
Guyana	0.00%	0
Haiti	0.00%	0
Honduras	0.00%	0
Hungary	0.00%	0
Iceland	0.00%	0
India	0.00%	0
Indonesia	0.00%	0
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.00%	0
Iraq	0.00%	0
Ireland	0.00%	0
Israel	0.00%	0
Italy	0.00%	0
Jamaica	0.00%	0
Japan	0.00%	0

Jordan	0.00%	0
Kazakhstan	0.00%	0
Kenya	0.00%	0
Kuwait	0.00%	0
Kyrgyzstan	0.00%	0
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.00%	0
Latvia	0.00%	0
Lebanon	0.00%	0
Lesotho	0.00%	0
Liberia	0.00%	0
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0.00%	0
Liechtenstein	0.00%	0
Lithuania	0.00%	0
Luxembourg	0.00%	0
Madagascar	0.00%	0
Malawi	0.00%	0
Malaysia	0.00%	0
Maldives	0.00%	0
Mali	0.00%	0
Malta	0.00%	0
Marshall Islands	0.00%	0
Mauritania	0.00%	0
Mauritius	0.00%	0
Mexico	0.00%	0
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.00%	0
Monaco	0.00%	0
Mongolia	0.00%	0
Morocco	0.00%	0
Mozambique	0.00%	0
Myanmar	0.00%	0

Namibia	0.00%	0
Nepal	0.00%	0
Netherlands	0.00%	0
New Zealand	92.31%	108
Nicaragua	0.85%	1
Niger	0.00%	0
Nigeria	0.00%	0
Norway	0.00%	0
Oman	0.00%	0
Pakistan	0.00%	0
Palau	0.00%	0
Panama	0.00%	0
Papua New Guinea	0.00%	0
Paraguay	0.00%	0
Peru	0.00%	0
Philippines	0.00%	0
Poland	0.00%	0
Portugal	0.00%	0
Qatar	0.00%	0
Republic of Korea	0.00%	0
Republic of Moldova	0.00%	0
Romania	0.00%	0
Russian Federation	0.00%	0
Rwanda	0.00%	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.00%	0
Saint Lucia	0.00%	0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.00%	0
Samoa	0.00%	0
San Marino	0.00%	0
Sao Tome and Principe	0.00%	0

Saudi Arabia	0.00%	0
Senegal	0.00%	0
Seychelles	0.00%	0
Sierra Leone	0.00%	0
Singapore	0.00%	0
Slovakia	0.00%	0
Slovenia	0.00%	0
Solomon Islands	0.00%	0
Somalia	0.00%	0
South Africa	0.00%	0
Spain	0.00%	0
Sri Lanka	0.00%	0
Sudan	0.00%	0
Suriname	0.00%	0
Swaziland	0.00%	0
Sweden	0.00%	0
Switzerland	0.00%	0
Syrian Arab Republic	0.00%	0
Taiwan	0.00%	0
Tajikistan	0.00%	0
Thailand	0.00%	0
Togo	0.00%	0
Trinidad and Tobago	0.00%	0
Tunisia	0.00%	0
Turkey	0.00%	0
Turkmenistan	0.00%	0
Uganda	0.00%	0
Ukraine	0.00%	0
United Arab Emirates	0.00%	0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	0.85%	1

United Republic of Tanzania	0.00%	0
United States of America	0.00%	0
Uruguay	0.00%	0
Uzbekistan	0.00%	0
Vanuatu	0.00%	0
Venezuela	0.00%	0
Viet Nam	0.00%	0
Yemen	0.00%	0
Yugoslavia	0.00%	0
Zambia	0.00%	0
Zimbabwe	0.00%	0
Number of respondents		117
Number of respondents who skipped this question		7

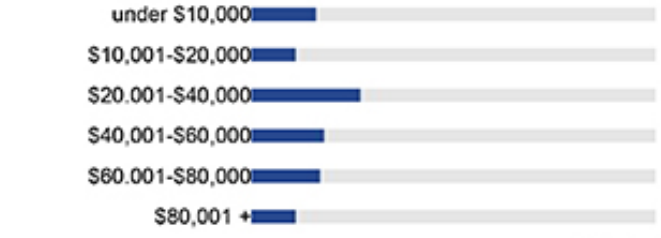
2. Gender

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Female	96.64%	115
Male	3.36%	4
Number of respondents		119
Number of respondents who skipped this question		5

3. Your age?

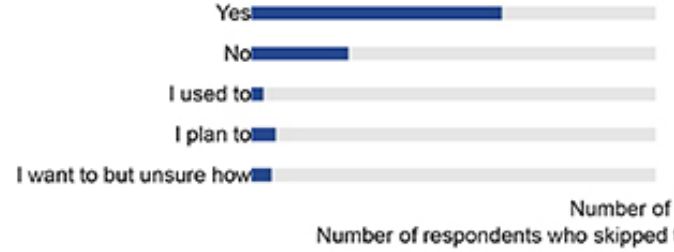
	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Under 25	7.50%	9
26-35	42.50%	51
36-45	32.50%	39
46-55	9.17%	11
56-65	6.67%	8
65+	1.67%	2
Number of respondents		120
Number of respondents who skipped this question		4

4. Your approximate income?



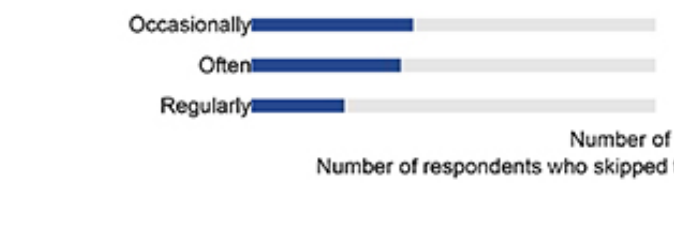
	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
under $10,000	15.79%	18
$10,001-$20,000	10.53%	12
$20,001-$40,000	27.19%	31
$40,001-$60,000	18.42%	21
$60,001-$80,000	16.67%	19
$80,001 +	11.40%	13
Number of respondents		114
Number of respondents who skipped this question		10

5. Do you sell your own handmade goods?

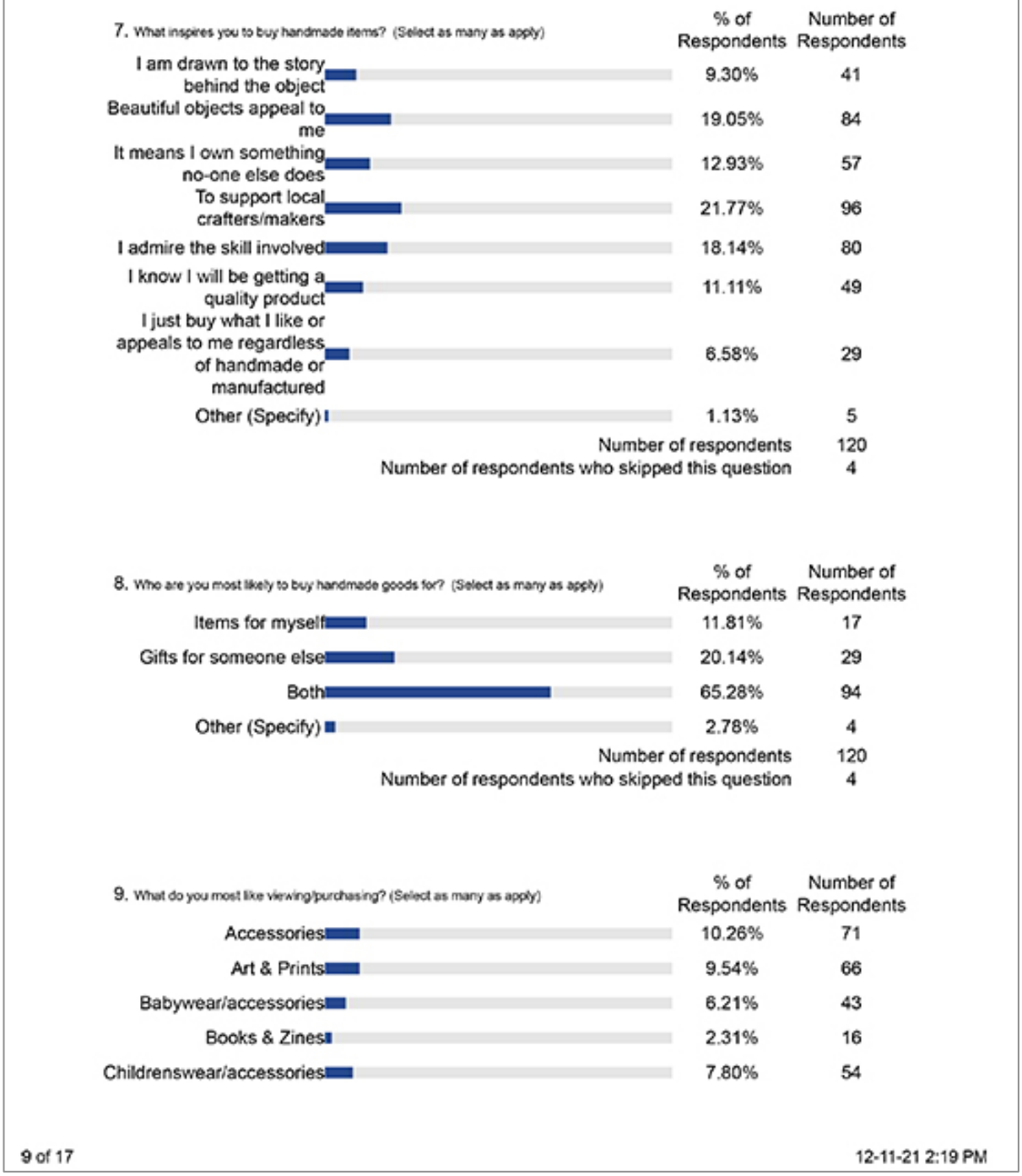


	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes	62.18%	74
No	23.53%	28
I used to	3.36%	4
I plan to	5.88%	7
I want to but unsure how	5.04%	6
Number of respondents		119
Number of respondents who skipped this question		5

6. How often have you bought handmade items in the past?



	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Never	0.00%	0
Occasionally	40.00%	48
Often	36.67%	44
Regularly	23.33%	28
Number of respondents		120
Number of respondents who skipped this question		4


7. What inspires you to buy handmade items? (Select as many as apply)
% of Respondents
Number of Respondents
I am drawn to the story behind the object
9.30%
41
Beautiful objects appeal to me
19.05%
84
It means I own something no-one else does
12.93%
57
To support local crafters/makers
21.77%
96
I admire the skill involved
18.14%
80
I know I will be getting a quality product
11.11%
49
I just buy what I like or appeals to me regardless of handmade or manufactured
6.58%
29
Other (Specify)
1.13%
5
Number of respondents
120
Number of respondents who skipped this question
4
8. Who are you most likely to buy handmade goods for? (Select as many as apply)
% of Respondents
Number of Respondents
Items for myself
11.81%
17
Gifts for someone else
20.14%
29
Both
65.28%
94
Other (Specify)
2.78%
4
Number of respondents
120
Number of respondents who skipped this question
4
9. What do you most like viewing/purchasing? (Select as many as apply)
% of Respondents
Number of Respondents
Accessories
10.26%
71
Art & Prints
9.54%
66
Babywear/accessories
6.21%
43
Books & Zines
2.31%
16
Childrenswear/accessories
7.80%
54

Clothing	7.80%	54
Edibles	7.37%	51
Furniture	4.34%	30
Homeware	9.97%	69
Jewellery	11.99%	83
Paper Goods	8.24%	57
Pet Products	1.73%	12
Supplies & Patterns	6.50%	45
Toys, Dolls & Miniatures	5.20%	36
Other (Specify)	0.72%	5
Number of respondents		120
Number of respondents who skipped this question		4

10. Where have you purchased handmade items from?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Gift Shops	12.88%	51
Websites/On-line marketplaces	23.99%	95
Craft Galleries	11.36%	45
Boutiques	9.60%	38
Craft Fairs/Markets	29.04%	115
Home Party	1.77%	7
Gift Shows	2.02%	8
Studio Visits	2.53%	10
Commissions	2.53%	10
Museum Shops	3.54%	14
Other (Specify)	0.76%	3
Number of respondents		119
Number of respondents who skipped this question		5

2. Markets / Fairs / Fetes etc

11. Do you attend craft markets as a buyer?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
More than once a month	10.62%	12
Several times a year	63.72%	72
Once a year	20.35%	23
Never	5.31%	6
Number of respondents		113
Number of respondents who skipped this question		11

12. Do you usually make a purchase at a craft market?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes	60.18%	68
No	2.65%	3
Depends	37.17%	42
Number of respondents		113
Number of respondents who skipped this question		11

13. When buying at a market do you most often spend your money on items....

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
under $20	41.07%	46
priced between $20 & $50	51.79%	58
priced between $50 & $100	5.36%	6
over $100	1.79%	2
Number of respondents		112
Number of respondents who skipped this question		12

14. How do you prefer to pay?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents

Cash	46.43%	52
Eftpos	47.32%	53
Credit card	6.25%	7
Number of respondents		112
Number of respondents who skipped this question		12

15. Who do you attend markets with?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Just me	27.52%	41
Family	49.66%	74
A group of friends	22.82%	34
Number of respondents		113
Number of respondents who skipped this question		11

16. There are a number of large annual events around the country, eg Martinborough Fair, Culverden Fete - with large attendance numbers. Do you attend any?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
I am local and go to my fav(s) every year	21.01%	25
I travel and make a weekend of it	4.20%	5
I go if I can	43.70%	52
I've never been to a large event	31.09%	37
Number of respondents		112
Number of respondents who skipped this question		12

17. Do you research a craft event online before attending – eg check their Facebook event page, website, blog for dates, times, details of stall holders attending?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes	48.65%	54
No	15.32%	17
Sometimes	36.04%	40
Number of respondents		111
Number of respondents who skipped this question		13

18. How have you heard about craft events you have attended? (Select all that apply)	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Flyer	11.71%	52
Newsletter	3.15%	14
Billboard advertising	6.31%	28
Facebook	19.37%	86
Twitter	1.13%	5
Blog	4.28%	19
Website	8.78%	39
Word of mouth	19.59%	87
Newspaper	10.81%	48
Radio ad	4.28%	19
Found by accident	9.91%	44
Other (Specify)	0.68%	3
Number of respondents		112
Number of respondents who skipped this question		12

19. On purchasing from a handmade seller at a market, do you follow up by visiting their on-line areas eg Facebook, Twitter, website, signing up to an email newsletter etc?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes	42.34%	47
No	5.41%	6
Sometimes	52.25%	58
Number of respondents		111
Number of respondents who skipped this question		13

3. Online Purchasing

20. How do you prefer to pay for on-line purchases?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Paypal	30.91%	34
Bank deposit	27.27%	30
Credit card	30.00%	33
Depends on value of purchase	11.82%	13
I don't purchase on-line	0.00%	0
Number of respondents		110
Number of respondents who skipped this question		14

21. How many hours per day do you spend on Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, sites?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Less than 1	15.45%	17
1-2	51.82%	57
3-4	21.82%	24
4 or more	10.91%	12
Number of respondents		110
Number of respondents who skipped this question		14

22. What would encourage you to purchase from an online Craft Business you aren't familiar with? (select as many as apply)	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Price	15.90%	73
Quality	15.69%	72
Integrity of maker	10.02%	46
Great range of Products	11.98%	55
Recommended by others	18.30%	84
Ease of use of website	14.81%	68
Security of website	11.11%	51
Other (Specify)	2.18%	10
Number of respondents		109
Number of respondents who skipped this question		15

23.
Which on-line areas do you purchase handmade items from? (select as many as apply)

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Felt	22.47%	60
Toggle	1.87%	5
Etsy	20.60%	55
Artfire	0.00%	0
Sellers own website	27.34%	73
via Facebook	25.09%	67
Other (Specify)	2.62%	7
Number of respondents		106
Number of respondents who skipped this question		18

24.
Do you make purchases from international handmade sellers?

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes	46.36%	51
Not yet, but intend to	12.73%	14
No	12.73%	14
No, I prefer to buy local	27.27%	30
Other (Specify)	0.91%	1
Number of respondents		110
Number of respondents who skipped this question		14

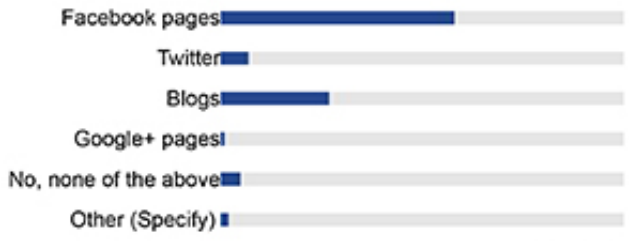
25.
Which sales incentives encourage you to buy...

	Yes	No	Maybe	Number of Respondents
Free freight	82% (88)	5% (6)	12% (13)	106
Buy one, get another at a discounted rate	34% (31)	25% (23)	39% (35)	89
Percentage discount, eg 20% off	62% (61)	7% (7)	30% (30)	98
Buy over $x , get a free...	23% (21)	36% (32)	39% (35)	87

Number of Respondents	109
Number of respondents who skipped this question	15

26.

o you actively follow and engage with your favourite Handmade sellers on-line areas? (select all that apply)



	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Facebook pages	58.33%	98
Twitter	7.14%	12
Blogs	26.79%	45
Google+ pages	0.60%	1
No, none of the above	5.36%	9
Other (Specify)	1.79%	3
Number of respondents		110
Number of respondents who skipped this question		14

27.

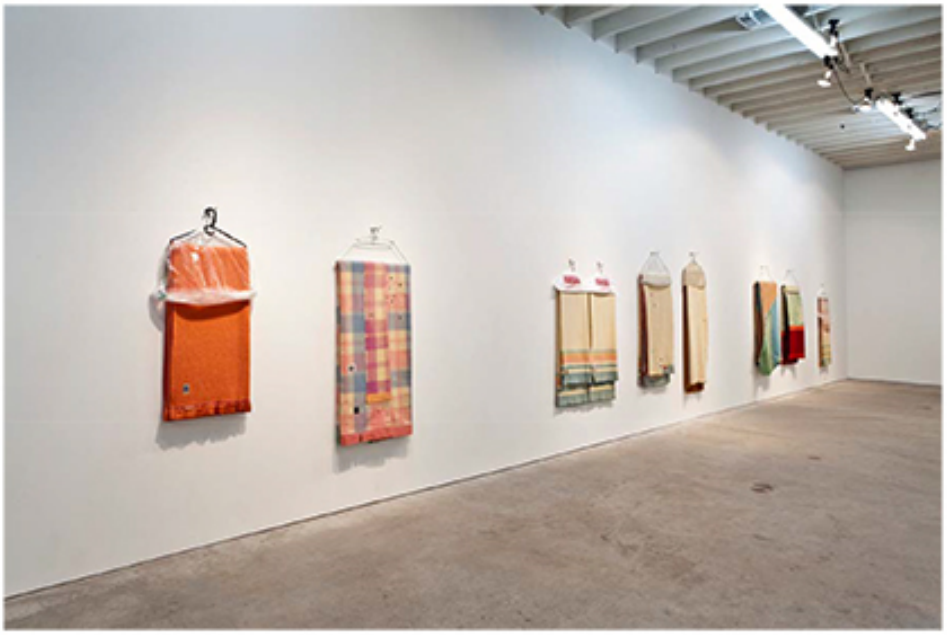
What are your opinions of giveaways?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Number of Respondents
They encourage my loyalty to the business	6% (7)	17% (19)	29% (32)	37% (41)	10% (11)	107
The occasional one is exciting and I like to participate	3% (4)	7% (8)	2% (3)	59% (61)	26% (27)	103
I like them if they are simple to enter	2% (3)	4% (5)	4% (5)	47% (51)	40% (44)	104
I like ones that challenge me eg, asking them to provide a photo or search for a clue on a website etc.	15% (16)	33% (34)	23% (24)	22% (23)	5% (6)	102
Frequent giveaways and I wonder if the sellers regular	7% (8)	18% (19)	20% (21)	34% (36)	20% (21)	103

prices are too high allowing them to give things away regularly

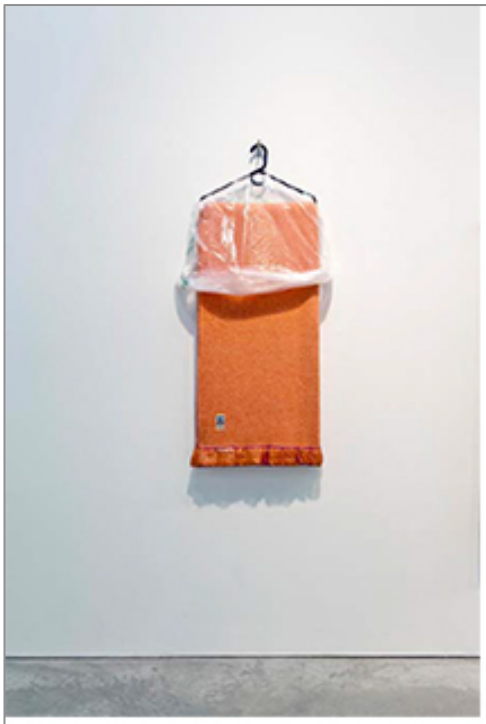
Number of Respondents	107
Number of respondents who skipped this question	17

APPENDIX 8
Susan Hobbs Gallery. *Liz Magor*. 2011



Liz Magor
installation view at Susan Hobbs Gallery, 2011

Susan Hobbs Gallery



Liz Magor
Kenwood (salmon), 2011
wool, fabric, plastic, and polymerized gypsum
116 x 54 x 13 cm

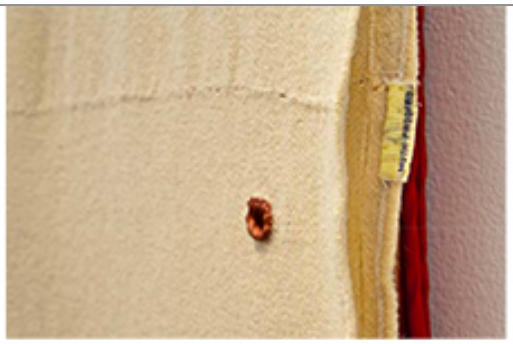
Liz Magor
Eatonia, 2011
wool, fabric, metal, and thread
145 x 62 x 6 cm

Susan Hobbs Gallery

Liz Magor
Mossfield Twins, 2011
wool, fabric, metal, paper, and plastic
136 x 100 x 6 cm

Liz Magor
Maple Leaf, 2011
wool, dye, fabric, metal, plastic, and thread
147 x 62 x 10 cm

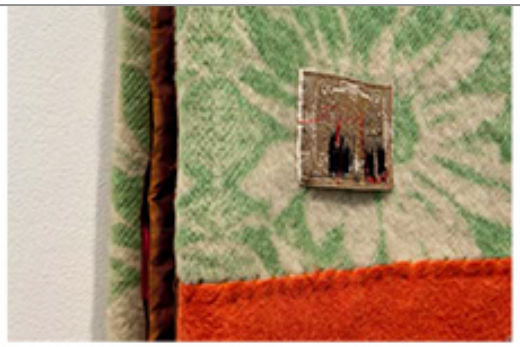
Susan Hobbs Gallery



Liz Magor
Moth-proofed, 2011
wool, hair, metal, plastic, polymerized gypsum, and thread
168 x 56 x 7 cm

Liz Magor
Modella/Everest, 2011
wool, fabric, metal, thread, and wood
156 x 67 x 10 cm

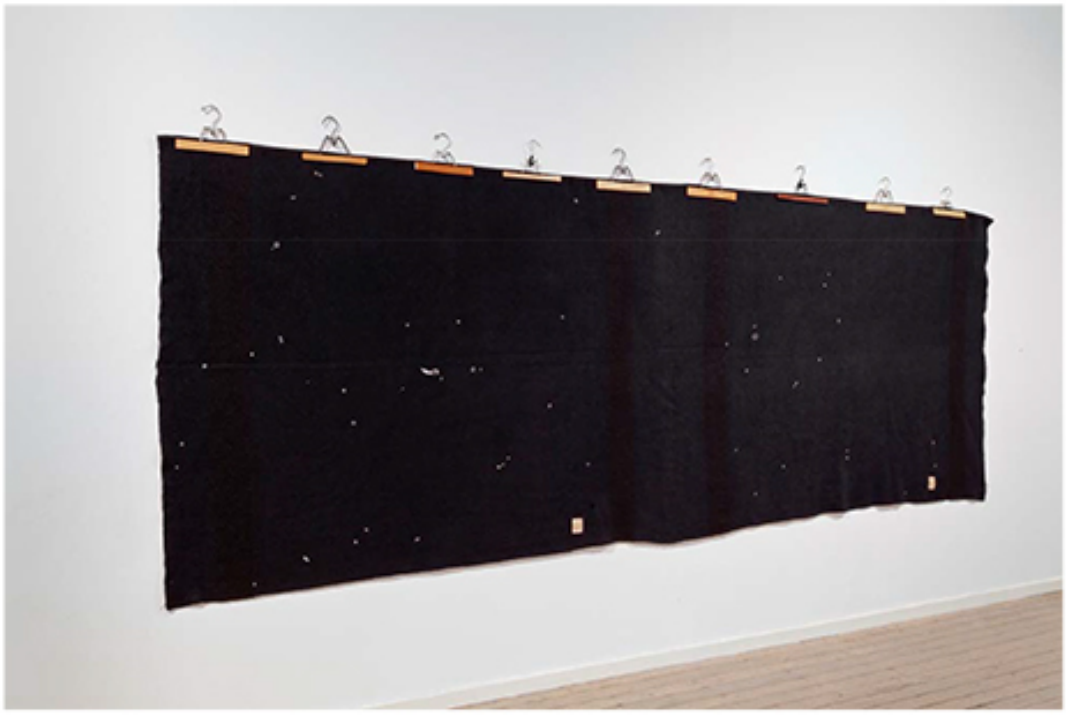
Susan Hobbs Gallery

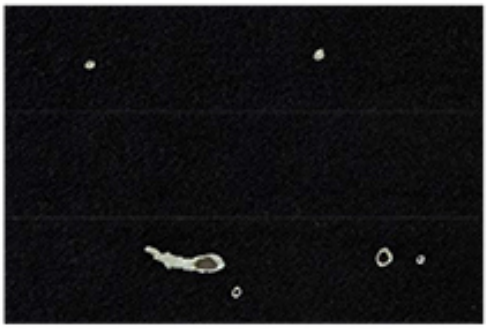


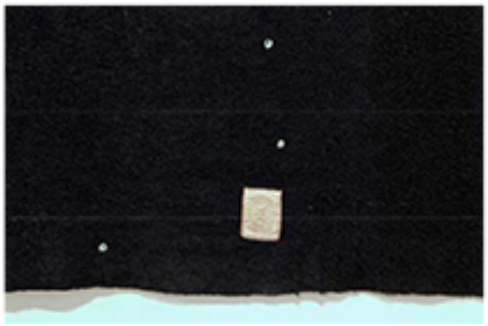
Liz Magor
Chinese Green, 2011
wool, fabric, metal, thread, and wood
149 x 63 x 12 cm

Liz Magor
Laurentian/Woolmark, 2011
wool, fabric, paper, plastic, and metal
142 x 56 x 11 cm

Susan Hobbs Gallery







Liz Magor
Hudson's Bay Double, 2011
wool, fabric, metal, polymerized gypsum, and wood
163 x 399 x 2.5 cm

Susan Hobbs Gallery

APPENDIX 9

Facebook Communication about Contemporary Tlingit Blanket Collecting

Ishmael Angaluuk Hope shared a link.
16 hours ago

As I'm learning about the Khu.éex', I realize that I absolutely love the idea of giving wool blankets. I love the history behind it. I love that it started out with animal hides and furs, and it moved to wool blankets during the 19th century through trade with the Hudson Bay Company and the United States military. It is incredibly satisfying to be able to save up and accumulate these kinds of gifts. I remember my dad, Andy Hope III-- Xhaastánch talking to me so proudly about finding inexpensive fleece blankets for a party. I remember, after the experience of the party, how he just couldn't go to sleep, and he just kept repeating to me that it's "soul food." That's so true.

I try to take care of my family first, to make sure we're doing okay, and then if there's a little something left over for myself, I like to save up for blankets, especially wool blankets of all kinds-- Pendleton, Hudson Bay, army surplus, utilitarian, all of it.

http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/history/blanket/history/home

Hbc Heritage | History
www.hbcheritage.ca

For over two centuries the Hudson's Bay Company point blanket has been a familiar item in Canada and around the world. It is enjoyed as much today as when it was first introduced into...

Unlike · Comment · Share

You, Zachary Jones, Emily Moore and 28 others like this.

Emily Moore Ishmael, you probably know this already, but a wonderful person reearching the history of these trade blankets is Fiona P. McDonald.
19 minutes ago · Like · 1

Ishmael Angaluuk Hope Aaa. I really wish I had the chance to meet her when she was in town! It was just too much of a crazy time. I'd say that this is a latent interest of mine. I didn't pay a whole lot of attention to blankets until I got thick into helping out Raven brothers and sisters for the Khu.éex'. Then it woke all kinds of deep feelings that my father shared with me, that I now understand just a little bit more clearly. It really is about love and honoring the ancestors, and holding up our fathers, paternal aunties and uncles and in-laws. I can understand just a little bit more why people worked so hard over many years to give great amounts of these kinds of gifts. It's for a beautiful thing. Also, wool is a great fabric, I believe. There is the historical connection with the 19th century, which I totally appreciate, and a very tangible, substantial gift to give people that you love.
7 minutes ago · Like

Write a comment...

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